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WILLIAM WILBERFORCE:

HIS FRIENDS AND HIS TIMES.

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BY

JOHN CAMPBELL COLQUHOUN.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE stated in the Introductory Chapter some of the reasons which have led me, at this time more especially, to offer sketches of a group of eminent persons who, at the end of last century, and early in this century, took a leading part in the cause of Christian philanthropy. Bound together by one sentiment, acting for the most part with great unity of purpose, they left on the character of their times traces which may be plainly discerned in the thoughts and activities of our day.

In endeavouring to convey a correct impression of their characters, I have received the utmost assistance from anecdotes and traditions supplied to me by the friends and relatives of some of the parties; and, by their indulgence, I have been permitted access to unpublished letters and journals which have thrown light both on the motives of those concerned and on the incidents of their lives. To those by whose kindness I have thus been

helped, I should have desired to offer my special thanks. But I am aware that some of my benefactors would strongly object to any public notice, and those the most to whom I am the most indebted;

> For not Mimosa's tender tree
> Shrinks sooner from the touch than she.

I must content myself, therefore, with a general expression of my obligations to all who have rendered me their invaluable assistance; and to my readers I may be permitted to say, that, if they shall find in these narratives anything that is new or interesting, it is not to the compiler that their chief acknowledgments are due.

J. C. COLQUHOUN.

8, Chesham Street;
March, 1866.

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CHAPTER XXI.

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WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.:
HIS FRIENDS AND HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

OUR TIMES AND THEIR TENDENCIES — PROGRESS — ORGANIC CHANGE — ROMANISM — RATIONALISM — LIBERALISM.

THE most notable incident that occurred during the lives of those whose biographies I have attempted to sketch, was the French Revolution—an event much remarked at the time from the magnitude of its crimes and casualties; but even more to be remarked now, on account of the lasting change it has effected in the sentiments of Europe. France has always been the country which, from its central position and intellectual power, has influenced other nations in their fashions and opinions.

Now the change which passed over France at the end of last century was in every sense a revolution. It was a revolution of dynasty, but much more a revolution of thought. From the most servile deference to monarchy, men passed at once to a democracy of a bolder character than the republics either

of Greece or of the United States. From a gradation of ranks which rose tier above tier, assigning to the upper orders special privileges, and heaping on the lower class penalties and fiscal burdens, the nation dropped down into a level on which all citizens were equal; and as the natural tendency of society, when left to itself, is to inequality, from the variety of talents and advantages, France endeavoured to counteract this, by compelling each successive generation to break up and divide among their children the wealth which individual industry had acquired.

Great as the change was in France in its organic institutions, it was no less great in its religious belief. Up to the time of the Revolution, France had adopted one creed, and had maintained one Church. It had treated dissent from that Church as a crime, and had put down by force every other worship. From this system of legalised intolerance, the nation advanced to the destruction of the State Church, and the rejection of all creeds. And, after that period of national atheism had ceased, it accepted all creeds as equal in the sight of the law.

This marvellous revolution of opinion was not the growth of a few years. It had been long in progress, and for nearly a century the signs of its approach might be traced. It was introduced and forwarded by men of genius, and every department of thought was affected by the movement. Voltaire and Rousseau, the Academy of Science, the côteries of wit, the salons of fashion, took their share in the work of preparation, and an active propagandism spread the new opinions. When the outburst came,

it was like the impetuosity of a Swiss torrent, held back by a barrier of ice, and tearing down in its headlong course everything that was fixed, solid, and ancient. Such an outbreak led to a reaction, and the terror of sanguinary misrule drove men to seek for safety in a military despotism. But even when that despotism had reached its acmé in the ascendancy of the first Emperor, it was not strong enough to stem, or turn aside, the current of the new opinions. Both the First and the Third Napoleon have appreciated the change, and have declared themselves the partisans and children of the French Revolution. They were indeed sagacious enough to perceive that religion was a useful instrument of government; and they accepted the Church of Rome as the Church of the State, because it was agreeable to the views of the majority in France. But in re-establishing the Church, they never ventured to return to its old principles. They were warned by events, and the present Emperor had been further admonished by the fall of Charles X. They proclaimed therefore a general toleration, and the endowment of other sects. They were equally observant and careful in secular matters. The value of a privileged and wealthy aristocracy was apparent to the First Napoleon; and after his time it was earnestly desired by Casimir Périer, the ablest minister of the second Revolution. But the wish to restore aristocracy was abandoned by both as unattainable, so thoroughly had the idea of equality taken possession of the French mind.

No sooner had these new ideas struck root in

France, than they spread with Oriental luxuriance over the soil of Europe. In other countries there was not a revolution of dynasty; but the revolution of opinion was complete. Germany kept her monarchies, and a crowd of petty principalities; and so long as her rulers maintain their armies, they are likely to hold their power. But over the educated classes a change of thought has passed, the most complete which the world ever saw. The literary men of Germany, her professors, authors, students, and schoolmasters, have all adopted the new ideas. You may trace them in the debates of their Parliaments, and in the habits of the people. Equal division of property among children is a settled principle. The notion of primogeniture is gone. The aristocracy is crumbling into decay; and out of the dead level of an equal citizenship, government selects the instruments of its administration, and substitutes bureaucracy for the natural aristocracy of rank and wealth.

How far, it will be asked, have these new ideas spread through England? When they first appeared, they were effectually resisted. We had always been a peculiar people, "*toto divisos orbe Britannos*," governed by our own notions, following our own practice. We had no need to go to France for our institutions. France, in fact, had come to learn of us. While Frenchmen were groaning under the weight of feudalism, we had been for centuries free. Our monarchy was limited by the power of the Commons; and our aristocracy, relieved from odious privileges and fiscal exemptions, had been long

cherished by the English people as a prize open to themselves, the honourable recompense of genius, valour, or public service. When therefore France, borrowing our Parliamentary system, abused it to purposes of faction, we turned from the caricature with disgust. We valued our own constitution the more that we saw its perversion. Hence the doctrines of Jacobinism became odious in England, and those who advocated such views were excluded for many years from Parliamentary power.*

Yet, in the very height of the conflict, when French opinions seemed to be universally unpopular, these principles were unconsciously infiltrating themselves into the English mind. The great opponents of the French Revolution among our statesmen were Pitt and Burke. They were attached to the institutions of England, to those of the Church as well as of the State; yet they first introduced principles which have shaken the ascendancy of the English Church, and are now, more fully developed, threatening her existence. Pressed, as politicians, to deal with the difficult problem of Ireland, where the majority dissent from the Established Church, these great statesmen felt it to be impolitic to exclude three-fourths of a nation from political rights. They gave to the Irish Romanists votes for members of Parliament: they were prepared to open to them the doors of Parliament itself.

They adopted another measure even more signifi-

* This led to the unpopularity of Fox and his friends, who dwindled to a small party, and were so weak as for some years to absent themselves from the debates of Parliament.

cant. They took a grant of the public money, and bestowed it on a college for the education of Romish priests. This measure was planned by Pitt, and both he and Lord Castlereagh designed, had they not been hindered, to provide a liberal endowment for the Romish Church.

But in these plans, though imperfectly considered in the hot and hasty pressure of politics, lay hid the living germ of the principles which the French Revolution has sanctioned. It was plain that if political rights were granted to the Irish Romanist, they could not be withheld from the English Dissenter; and it was no less plain, that if to all men, without distinction, the doors of Parliament were opened, it was idle to expect that the ascendancy of the Church of England could be long retained. For would those who dissented from the Church not use their power against it; or would they long endure that rank and wealth should be confined to a Church to which they did not belong? It was a logical result of their position in Parliament, either that no sect should receive public money, or that all sects should be equally endowed.

This question is now at issue; this struggle now divides political parties. The French doctrine of the *perfect equality of all sects*, and the neutrality of a State on all questions affecting religion, is the settled creed of a large school. It is adopted by some from conviction, and with a full understanding of its results; it is held by many from necessity, and from the pressure of popular sentiment. It begins by threatening the outworks of the Established Church;

it will push its advances within. It attacks the rate for the fabric; it will not leave unassailed the endowment of Tithe. Now it claims the Graveyard; to-morrow it will demand the Church. It has raised its battery against the weaker walls of the Irish Church; but its artillery is ready to open on the Church in England. With what results, this is not the time or the place to say.

But not on Church matters alone have those new ideas spread amongst us. The law of primogeniture, on which large landed property and the peerage depend, is attacked by a vigorous body of politicians. From the equality of all citizens, the suffrage of all electors is deduced. The logic is simple—those who demur to it appear illogical. Every day the pressure grows; and the rising tide of opinion, steadily advancing, crumbles piecemeal the old cliffs of the English shore. Doubtless there is a strong resistance; for the change is great. There is a deep alarm; for the issue is dark. On one side experience speaks, and dread of the consequences. Conscious of our long prosperity, reverencing our traditional greatness, thoughtful men recoil from a step, the benefits of which are questionable, and the hazard plain. The evils of democracy are undeniable. We read them in history; they stand before our eyes in other countries. The advantages of our peculiar constitution are marked. It has blended order with freedom, safety with progress; it has united men of every class, and the qualities of all, in the Government—the caution of the old is represented, and the enterprise of the young—the

thrift of capital, and the hardihood of adventure. To revolutionize this system seems unwise. To withdraw power from *all* classes of the nation, in order to transfer it to *one* class—to take it from the educated and thoughtful, and to give it to the credulous and unwary—this seems a bold experiment. We cast about for assistance—for some point at which to pause. We sought it in 1832, and thought we had found it; but again the pressure, the onward progress, the downward slope, the sure decline. Something may be hoped from English wariness; much may be feared from popular excitement. Nor can we venture to say, as we look at the current of new opinions running deep and strong over the breadth of Europe, that England will long remain the only country which combines in her balanced constitution the conservative influences of wealth, and the forward impulses of progress; which preserves us from the licence of unreflecting democracy, and the iron pressure of a despot's hand.

But it is not to political questions only that the new ideas introduced by the French Revolution apply. The religious views of men were powerfully affected. Long before political changes were imagined, Voltaire and his school had attacked with witty sarcasms the prevailing belief. In France, the creed which they encountered (as Protestantism was so weak as to be powerless) was the creed of the Church of Rome; and certainly that Church had in France every possible advantage. Nowhere had she been established with greater authority, or, as it seemed, on more durable foundations. She

had passed through a fierce struggle with Protestantism, and had come out victorious. Enlisting Louis XIV. on her side, she had trodden out by main force the decaying embers of the rival faith. The people were with her, and obeyed her with a blind obedience. Her prelates were the chief ministers of the State; and while the Court set the fashion of opinion, the Church ruled the Court with absolute sway. With these advantages she entered, early in the last century, into conflict with a few clever and witty writers in Paris. When they attacked her, she was able to drive some of them from society, and to banish some from France. Every social influence was enlisted against the new opinions, and the only weapon left in the hands of their advocates was the appeal of reason to the thinking part of the community. Yet, with this single weapon, the opponents of the Church of Rome became formidable. For these writers had originated an Encyclopædia, which discussed the wide circle of science; and it was felt to be but reasonable that from such a review they should not exclude that high branch of philosophy, which concerned the morals and the destinies of man. But when, in these inquiries, which were conducted with daring vigour, the inquirers were met by legends of apocryphal saints, by tales of romantic asceticism, and marvels of childish miracles, these stories, better fitted for a nursery, were received with shouts of scorn. It was a perilous stage in argument, when the audience, as well as the judges, joined in laughing the defence out of court.

But not only was the intellect of all that was intellectual in France enlisted against Rome. The moral sense of moralists was ranged on the same side. Philosophers might understand little of religious dogmas; they cared little for the jargon of theological schools. But their moral sense told them that there could be no true worship of the Deity without purity of life, and no religious faith where there was no respect for virtue. But in the creed of Rome they found that morality and faith lay wide apart,—that actions were reckoned right, if done for the Church, which were flagitiously wrong,—that falsehood and fraud were encouraged, cruelty and murder were lauded, if they were directed against heretics,—that kings might live all their lives as profligates, if only they would die remorseless persecutors,—that priests, who had scandalized the world by their vices, were raised by the Church to its highest dignities,—and in every class there were devotees highly approved, who made up for a licentious youth and a selfish manhood by the sacrifice of natural ties and lawful affections to the claims of Rome. No wonder that from such facts men drew their own conclusions, and that all agreed that, if Rome was a true picture of Christianity, the further from Christianity the nearer to God. Out of this monstrous spectacle grew up the national infidelity which, in the end of last century, covered France.

In England, during the same active period of thought, there was a school of scepticism under different circumstances. Christianity was repre-

sented among us by a very different creed and different churches. The established churches, indeed, had in both countries fallen into a state of apathy. In Scotland, Presbyterianism was tepid and repressive. The Church of England was torn by divisions, and lowered by a ministry which professed a creed which its clergy did not believe. But in both Churches there were bright exceptions in some of the pastors. In the Church of England especially men could always turn from the sordid practice and sceptical indifference of the minister, to the sublime devotion of the ritual, and its mingled voices of wisdom and piety. And, just as the scandals of the English clergy became too gross to be borne, there arose within the Church a knot of energetic men, whose sincerity could not be questioned, and whose enthusiasm became contagious, who originated a movement through English society which recalled it to better opinions.

Nor was English Deism recommended by the same talent as in France. Lord Shaftesbury was a brilliant writer; the political style of Lord Bolingbroke is attractive. But the names of Toland and Collins, of Tyndal and Morgan and Chubb, the leading English sceptics of last century, proclaim their inferiority; and their attacks on Christianity only served to enhance the merits of the defence undertaken by Bentley and Warburton, and by the social talent of Samuel Johnson. Nor did French scepticism ever become popular among us. Men were disgusted by its flippant ribaldry. They treated the school of Voltaire as Dr. Johnson treated the Abbé Raynal: they turned on their

heel, and walked scornfully away. It was a different school—not a school of superficial sarcasm, but a school of deliberate reasoning—which alone could move the English mind.

Even in France the influence of the Voltairian infidelity was not durable. The flood was violent, but when it had run its course, it subsided, and the Church of Rome, to some extent, regained her influence. For scepticism affecting a whole nation, is seldom found, and is not lasting. The majority of men are guided by the sentiments implanted in our nature, and of these none are stronger than belief in a God and a future state, and the desire for future happiness. Hence both the thoughtful and the thoughtless seek for a creed.

No doubt the creed of Rome is hard for intelligent men to accept. Her fables shock the reflecting, and her immoralities disgust the pure. Hers, in fact, is the old creed of the debased period of the ancient world, only with an altered nomenclature. The Virgin has assumed the position of Venus or Diana; Joseph and Antony occupy the posts of Mercury and Apollo.* The worship is the invention of man.

* Mr. Gladstone's ingenious argument in favour of the effects of the Pagan worship of early Greece, has attracted much notice. But the elevation of humanity into Deity, which was the theory of the uninstructed heathen, is a very different thing from the elevation of men and women, as saints, to worship in Christian times. The one might present a sublimated and refined type of humanity; the other, by thrusting a mob of vulgar beings, full of vain conceits, foolish asceticism, fabulous powers, and puerile miracles, into the heights of heaven, and presenting them as objects of adoration, obscures Deity, and makes humanity contemptible. It

The objects of worship are men and women, raised in the one case to Olympus, now to heaven, but still the beings of earth, with earthly affections; interesting themselves for men, favouring, helping, guarding them; indulgent to their frailties, sympathising with their distresses, presenting themselves as mediators, to offer their prayers, and to intercede on their behalf with a distant, unknown, and austere God. These beings, propitiated by votive offerings, gratified by human homage, by amulets and scapulars worn in their honour,

'makes of men the Ogres of nursery tales, or the Dæmons of Eastern story. The effect on art is no less remarkable. We accept Mr. Gladstone's indications that art acquired dignity and beauty from her efforts to represent gods and goddesses. But the representation of the Virgin and the saints, in place of giving us an Apollo Belvedere or a Venus de Medici, produces monstrosities as hideous as the wax figures of Madame Tussaud, or the giants and giantesses of a village fair. The refined genius of Fra Bartolommeo, Andrea del Sarto, or Raffaelle, occupied itself successfully in painting in the Madonna a beautiful and gentle mother. They represented woman in the graces of motherly womanhood. No doubt, the Madonna of Raffaelle (that di San Sisto is an example) has an air of almost divine beauty. Yet it was chiefly into the face of the child (as both in that picture and in the Madonna della Sedia) that the artist threw the deep mystery of *Deity*.

The ascension of the Madonna was indeed given these great painters as a subject; but the great work by Tintoretto places the Virgin literally *in nubibus*, and fixes the eye on the exquisite group of the Apostles below. The *sculptured* figures of the Virgin, whether in Italy or France, black or white, are always disgusting exhibitions of vulgar handicraft; and her worship and history (see "Glories of Mary") are characterized by legends, the puerility of which is only exceeded by their mendacity—uniting more folly and falsehood than can be found in any creed, I can hardly except the absurdities of Hindoo mythology.

brought to the eye by representation of pictures and images, impressed on the heart by a fellowship of weakness, are invoked by litanies of supplication, and bend to the favoured worshipper a ready ear. But this worship, essentially the same in both ages, as it was not satisfactory to the thoughtful men of Athens and Rome, to the inquiring intelligence of Socrates, Plato, or Cicero, so it cannot now be adequate to the wants and cravings of a highly civilized age. The drift of the worship is in both cases too transparent. The frauds and trickery of oracles, omens, and sacrifices; the stories of relics, visions, false miracles, and purgatory;—these, gainful to the augur* and the priest, become too gross to be accepted by the reflecting. In both systems, religion, degraded into an art of conjuring, imposes on the ignorant, but is contemptible in the eyes of the wise. And it must be added that both systems confront and defy Christianity. There was no truce, as the old Roman found, between the worship of Jupiter and of Christ. As little peace is there now between the spiritual communion of the Christian with an ascended Saviour, and the worship of Mary or Joseph, as it is practised in St. Peter's, in the puppet shows of the Capitol, or in the tawdry idolatry of the cathedrals and chapels of Paris and France, of Brussels and Belgium, of Dublin and Tipperary.

In that marvellous discourse, (John iv. 21—24,)

* Cato said he wondered that the augurs could meet each other with grave faces. Among the Romish priests, infidelity prevails to an enormous extent.

which the great Teacher addressed to an ignorant but inquiring mind, He explained the grand principle of His religion to be independent of place, race, or human structures; but to consist in the communion of man's spirit with God's, the unbosoming of thought, the unburdening of conscience, the outpouring of the heart to the God-Man. The test and the characteristic of Christianity is thus made *the communion of the human mind with the Divine.* Whereas the object of the Church of Rome is to impede and divert that communion. She meets her worshippers in the entrance of her churches, she turns them to her confessional boxes, she makes them pour forth their hearts to a man, confess sin and crave pardon from a man. She draws them to her altars, she shows them her priests, lifted on high as superior beings, flattered with incense, distinguished by dress, and by a *corona* of satellites, taking into their hands inanimate substance, and by their power converting it into Deity; no approach to God but through them, no hope of absolution or salvation but from their hands. Romanism therefore is not only un-Christian but anti-Christian; not Paganism restored, but Paganism exaggerated. For a worshipper of the old world might, by elevating men in their fancy into gods, perchance exalt humanity; but Rome, in raising her saints to heaven, dethrones and degrades the living God.

Still, in spite of these delusions, the world, when in search of a creed, will accept, for want of a better, the creed of Rome. For, with many stumbling-blocks to the thoughtful, Rome has her attractions

for the thoughtless. Her promises are many; her assurance is strong. She relieves the anxious; she sustains the timid; to the disquieted she offers peace; to the desponding hope; an opiate to the guilty; to the sensual, license; to the sensuous, æsthetic beauty; to the frivolous, a gaudy show; to the bustling, work; to the contemplative, pleasing dreams; to the excitable, emotions; to the earnest, laborious sacrifice. Therefore we are not surprised to find that the influence of Rome in these latter days has revived, and is spreading both through England and France.

But it will be said that Rome not only attracts the thoughtless, but allures and retains within her many devout Christians. This is undeniable; as certain as any fact within our experience. The serene wisdom of Pascal, Fénélon's self-denying charity, the practical devotion of the Jansenists, Madame Guyon's* seraphic enthusiasm; in our own day, the deep religious life of Madame Schwetchine,† and the mournful piety of Eugénie de Guérin.‡ All these, and countless more, are witnesses to the truth that Rome incloses in her fold many genuine Christians. How is this to be explained? Easily; if we consider the influences of childhood, the power of habit,§ and the ease with which, practising the routine in which we have been trained,

* See "Life of Madame de la Mothe Guyon," by T. C. Upham.

† "Madame Schwetchine; sa vie et ses œuvres," par le Conte de Falloux.

‡ "Eugénie de Guérin," par G. S. Trebutien.

§ See the remarkable case of Luther, and the hold which, after his awakening, Rome retained over his daring mind.

we live our own life of separate thought in the midst of external forms. Those, in fact, whom a higher power has touched, can find in everything round them matter for thankfulness and for progress. The maze of outward ceremonies, the barbarous sounds of an unintelligible service, the deceptive symbols of unreal sacrifices, these, though they do not help, cannot hinder the earnest and faithful soul. Such worshippers pass through outward forms into a region of spiritual thought of which the vulgar devotee has no conception. The vain emblem is lifted up before their eyes, the assumption of supernatural power is made by the priest, the litany of superstition is offered to the Virgin or the Saint; they meanwhile, escaping from the noisy theatre, and soaring into the air of the real heavens, are casting at the feet of the God-man their sins and wants, and drink from the fountain of His overflowing sympathy draughts of peace, which He has promised to bestow. These worshippers, though apparently in Rome, are not of Rome. "They worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Not on the Seven Hills and Rome's meretricious temples do they dwell. Their life of thought is on the mount of sublime contemplation.

But on the other hand, while Rome has little hold of these worshippers, boasts of them only when it suits her, but more often hates and persecutes them,* she finds in other sects her compensation;

* See her treatment of Madame de Guyon, whom she imprisoned; of the Jansenists, whom she extinguished; and see

for she is ever putting forth her feelers, and drawing into her embrace many nominal Protestants. All who substitute forms for faith, reveries for realities, all who find in outward symbols the comfort to be had in spiritual thought, all who place on priestly acts the reliance to be reposed in a Divine intercessor,—all these (and they are Legion) nominal Protestants, appertain truly to Rome.

But, with all these acquisitions, the influence of Rome is subject to this great defect. It is not general, and it is not durable. It magnetizes the weaker portions of society; it has no power over the strong. The frivolous and the sensuous, the idle and imaginative, the victims of crime and the votaries of fashion, all these find in Romish service a resource and excitement. To her also repair the dissolute, who seek a cheap licence; and the guilty, under the lash of remorse, who need an opiate. Others, who are restless and speculative, always inquiring and never satisfied, tired at length of their doubts, fling their consciences into the keeping of Rome.

But, though thus among the upper circle of society Rome finds in modern days numerous followers; and though she retains her hold over the ignorant, and leads with unbroken authority the Celtic passions of Ireland and France, over the masses of our Saxon race she exercises no sway. Strong in the Faubourg

Pascal's life-long warfare with the Jesuits, the chosen soldiers of Rome. Of the sufferings of the Jansenists of Port Royal, Sir James Stephen's Essay gives a clear sketch; Essays, vol. i. p. 431.

St. Germain, attractive to the fashionable circles of London, the mercantile and mechanical classes of Paris, Rouen, and Lyons, the masses of English industry, from the metropolis outwards, turn from her observances with indifference, and detect as well as dislike her priestcraft. These classes, if they would have a creed, must seek it elsewhere than in Rome.

For these persons Germany has provided an attractive creed. It was produced there more than a century ago, rose at one time to great ascendancy, has of late somewhat declined; but, while losing influence in the country of its birth, has, in our days, spread over England with a quick and exuberant growth. Whatever may be its ultimate results, it is to be carefully distinguished from the scepticism which, in the last century, affected England and prevailed in France. It has none of the rabid hatred of Voltaire for our Divine Master,* nor of the scornful defiance of Diderot, D'Holbach, and Helvétius. To Christianity its attitude is respectful; to Scripture it pays a deference which is almost reverential. It offers to the Founder of Christianity the homage of its esteem: it selects His life as a model of benevolence, and His character as the type of sublime goodness. It finds in the labours of His apostles the signs of a generous enthusiasm, and in the moral precepts of the Gospel lessons of charity, which excel those presented to us by the highest philosophy of Greece

* "Écrasez l'Infâme!" was his usual expression.

and Rome.* It traces in the self-denying life, and the voluntary death of the Saviour, the conspicuous service of the patriot and the martyr; and the example of His goodness is recognised as the inspiration of His Spirit, breathing a purifying influence, and lifting men above the sordid interests of earth, to enlist them in the practice of virtue.

But that inspiration, these reasoners contend, has its seat in the mind; and its organ is the conscience.† To the conscience, then, as the final arbiter, all questions of faith and morals must be submitted. Where the conscience has been developed by civilization, it will pronounce a just judgment; and as it sits the representative of Deity in the human breast, its decisions are without appeal. Its province is to review not only the doings of man, but those sayings which profess to be divine; and, as it ascertains truth by its inherent faculty, it will decypher with certainty the character of the sacred records. Whatever in these is congenial with its moral instincts, is true; whatever violates its instinct, is false. And as, in reviewing the history of the Old Testament, or studying the dogmas of the New, men find much which they cannot reconcile with their ideas of the Divine character, and their conception of the Divine mercy,

* See Lecky's "History of Rationalism," vol. ii. pp. 256, 258, 263. "The precepts and examples of the Gospel struck a chord of pathos, which the noblest philosophies of antiquity had never reached." Ib. p. 266.

† See Lecky, vol. i., pp. 369—384.

they reject these without hesitation. Thus the wars of the Jews and their massacres, the stern injunction of God and the offered sacrifice of Abraham, the remorseless tactics of Moses and Joshua, are set aside by them as the rude traditions of a barbarous age. Sometimes these reasoners assail the genuineness of the sacred record, at other times they impugn its authenticity; sometimes they reject scattered verses or chapters, at other times five books fall under their vigorous stroke.

While thus, in obedience to his moral instincts, the philosopher modifies the records of Revelation, his intelligence, guided by science, can pronounce no less decisively on the history or the language of Scripture. Whatever he perceives to be beside or beyond nature, he denounces as impossible, and such narratives he treats as the myths of ancient fiction, the allegories of poetic fancy, or the inventions of pious fraud.

Disposing thus of the earlier records, which stretch into the period of uncertain tradition, these reasoners handle with equal boldness the narratives of the New Testament which fall within the period of historical evidence. The pure morality and the sublime philosophy of the New Testament seem to them worthy of all admiration; and the Founder's self-denying life and death they follow with applause. But when this death is set before them as an offering to pacify God, and a suffering to atone for the sins of man, these ideas, which they hold to be inconsistent with the benevolence of the Deity, they dismiss with scornful impatience.

The marvels of Christ's omniscience, the miracles of His wonder-working hand, hitherto received as signs of Deity, and evidences to attest His mission, they treat either as deceptions practised (with a good intention) on popular credulity, or as traditions carelessly received, and resting on imperfect testimony.*

While thus they sweep from before them the leading dogmas of Scripture, the tangled mass of subordinate doctrines necessarily falls away: the malignity and penalty of human sin, the certainty and nearness of Divine judgment, the need and the mode of man's escape, the offer and the assurance of Divine help,—all these disappear; and while miracles, prophecies, and evangelic truths vanish, the leaders of this new Reformation proclaim to us that we are approaching the advent of an age of marvellous knowledge. Rejecting the notion of a general Inspiration of Scripture, that notion which mystified Luther, Melancthon, Cranmer, and Hooker, which misled the weaker intellects of Augustin, Pascal, Bacon, and Newton, they bid us follow their steps with undoubting confidence into the moonlight of their chilling philosophy, where, as the bats of ancient tradition flap their wings and disperse, they promise us, by the light of science, a discovery of truth, which will at

* A fair summary of French Infidelity and German Rationalism is given in an able work of the late Sanderson Robins, unhappily left incomplete by his death. "A Defence of the Faith," by Sanderson Robins. Longmans. 1862.

once satisfy our understandings and purify our hearts.

> "Ibant obscuri solâ sub nocte per umbram,
> Perque domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna."

To offer any answer to these speculations would here be presumptuous and out of place. We may leave them to be dealt with by the competent pens of learned theologians; nor would such discussions have their proper place in a work of biography. But there is one remark, relevant to the following narratives, which I desire respectfully to offer to the able and candid minds that are tempted to embrace the creed of Rationalism. The most recent* and, I may add, the most temperate advocate of this creed has, in explaining to us its progress and its approaching triumph, admitted freely that, as we owe to Christianity charity, loving kindness, and a spirit of self-sacrifice, so these virtues are the true and only signs of a genuine Religion.

I ask him, then, to turn to the lives that follow, one of which he has himself selected as a type of true philanthropy; † and to place alongside of these any twelve characters he may choose, as eminent in the school of Rationalism. Let him take these not from England, in which the Rationalists of last century were little distinguished, but from France and Germany, where they rose to eminence. In France let him take Voltaire, whom he has often cited; and Diderot, who originated the Encyclopædia; and Baron D'Holbach, the centre of the

* Lecky's "History of Rationalism."

† See Lecky, vol. i. pp. 381—383.

circle; the accomplished D'Alembert; Abbé Raynal; and, in modern days, Auguste Comte. In Germany let him take Wolff, the founder of German Rationalism; and Kant,* to whom a large body of thoughtful reasoners defer; and Hegel, the friend of Goethe and Schiller; and Lessing,† who adorned Scepticism by literature; and Semler, who perfected the scheme of Rationalism by rejecting creeds, Scriptural histories, and miracles; and Strauss, who in our own times has laid waste, by his bold interpretations, the verities of the Christian faith.

Can he, from the biographies of these distinguished men, produce any well-authenticated examples of habitual self-denial, of unselfish charity, disinterested activity, and courageous self-sacrifice? Of the best of these men, we can only say that they lived in literary ease; that they were attentive to their own comforts, and both in France and Germany dissembled their convictions in order to retain their Professorships; while of many of them, the historian is obliged to confess, that a life of more heartless selfishness, unamiable passions, and sensual vice, is not easily to be found. When he has reviewed these lamentable histories, and noticed this painful contrast between exalted philosophy and debased habits, let him turn to the group of Wilberforce and his Friends; and observing their worth, their unblemished integrity, their large loving kindness, the purity which shrank from evil, and the charity which, doing good, uncomplainingly

* See Lecky, vol. i. p. 320. † Ibid. p. 320.

suffered wrong, let him say, with whom are to be found the moral virtues which he has justly selected as the signs of a sterling faith. Let him add to this, that while Rationalism, which professes to elevate humanity by unloosing the shackles of worn-out dogmas and traditions, fails, as it would seem, either to improve the mind or purify the heart; he cannot but remark that the men, whose worth he himself attests, held fast the dogmas which he is anxious to abandon, and clung with jealous fidelity to the Sacred Record, which critics question and disparage.

But if this be the fact, ought not the candid reasoner to review his position? May not that new school, which invites his adhesion, have inherent in its system the germ of the selfishness and cynicism which he condemns; and may not the virtues, which apart from Christianity he will seek in vain, grow out of these very truths which he is told to set aside as obsolete, and rest for their sanction on the Word at which sceptics cavil? And is it not a process more logical and more wise to accept from the great Teacher the lesson He has bequeathed us, to enter His school as learners, with childlike trust, and, dismissing the vain questions of casuistry, and the vainer solutions of ingenuity, to scan with earnestness the words of that unrivalled Book, which is open to the mind of a child, yet can fill the intellect of a sage; clouded in parts, and obscured by the weakness of human instruments and by the casualties of human transmission; but which gives us in its in-

tegrity the unquestioned will of the great Father; and which, patiently studied by us, the creatures of a day, will assuredly raise us to the undying hope of Christian faith, and to the full stature of understanding men?

CHAPTER II.

SOME PASSAGES OF A PUBLIC LIFE.

THE stream of life runs so fast, that it soon carries us far away from banks which, a short time ago, were crowded with living figures, notable both for their words and deeds. And as our bark glides quickly down its course to the eternal ocean, we soon lose sight of the men who once filled the world's eye, from whom only a few years have parted us, yet who now, seen through the haze of a past generation, seem separated from us as by an interval of centuries. We are glad, then, when some veteran, who has lived with them, looks out from his retreat, to tell us, in his advanced age, of the men whom he knew when he was young. Stirred by such memories, we too seek to retrace our recollections, to put together what we have heard in days long gone by, if so we may succeed in recalling the services of men who did much, in their day, for their generation, and held a high place in the sight of their age.

It is a summer morning. Across the heath which extends from the slopes above Wandsworth, stretches

a level ground, flat as the surface of a lake. Eastward of the heath, where now smart villas in Gothic, Grecian, and nondescript architecture are scattered, lie rich woods with thick underwood, undisturbed by man. Westward, over valley and forest, the landscape spreads to the Surrey Hills. At your feet is a dell, familiar now to volunteers and spectators of reviews, then chiefly known by those who, wishing to escape notice, crept stealthily from London to fight their duel in the solitary dingle near the Wimbledon windmill. On this road a yellow carriage appears in the grey of the morning, not bearing a freight of duellists, but carrying three gentlemen to a villa which lies further on the road to the west. Two of these are young, one of more mature years. One of the youths, shortly before this time a stripling at Cambridge, having kept his terms and put on his gown at the Temple, has become, at twenty-four, a man of whom the English Parliament and the world at large are speaking much. He has twice filled the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, twice led the House of Commons, and is now the Premier on whom the firm and resolute King George III. relies, to carry him over the heads of a majority in the House of Commons to the accomplishment of his plans. On that tall, stiff, lean, angular figure rests a head as good as any that you can pick out in England—that reckons well, and administers well, and can lead the acts and mould the thoughts of men; a lordly mind, and a mouth which speaks words full and clear, strong words rolling on like waves, and mastering men's souls. The other is an older man, in whose broad Scotch dialect you detect that he is

born to the north of the Tweed, and bred there; not a man to bow down before, and make an idol of. Yet plain judgment and strong sense are there; and under the broad forehead and wiry eyebrows flashes a pair of eyes that reveal to you purpose and strong will—a man wary, shrewd, dexterous, prompt in action, ready in expedients, full of energy and self-reliance; a serviceable friend, and a very formidable foe. Yet, with all his self-reliance, he bows to the younger man as his leader, takes his direction from him, and is ready to do his bidding. Such were Harry Dundas and William Pitt in the early days of their political friendship.

The third person who makes up the trio in the yellow chaise, is a slight, feeble, wavy figure, a good bodkin, as he sits there talking to both, amusing them with the sparkles of his wit, making the journey at this late hour a pleasant excursion with his sallies of irrepressible merriment. A spare, lithe figure, not quite straight, with a face so odd, that at first sight you pronounce it ugly; with eyes so small and near-sighted as to make him almost blind; yet with such life and play of features, that you soon forget the oddity of the countenance; and such the sunbeams of the temper, that you turn instinctively to him to be lighted and refreshed. Talking, jesting, joyous, he is carrying his grave companions in his carriage to his villa; and handing them over, after a stormy debate, to hours of welcome rest, he is up again to summon them in the morning with that silver voice of his, musical as a lark and lively as a boy. So, leaving the older man to his business, he carries his younger companion, as full of fun and jest

as himself, to fence and run in the garden, off with him down the Wimbledon slopes to Lord Spencer's lake, to plant him in a boat, splash him with his awkward oar, twist his line into knots, and labour hard to angle for carp and tench with much zeal and little gain. But withal he makes the young Premier forget his cares, get rid of India bills and budgets, and Opposition votes and threats; so that the chamber of St. Stephen's, with chair, and mace, and serjeant, and members, makes itself wings and flies away, and the statesman drops his load and becomes light of heart.

Pass a few years, and the scene has changed. The men are there, little altered; but a grave, dignified figure has joined them, and full of great thoughts and sonorous words appear the high features of Grenville. But the other two men are but little altered. The Premier, still a youth, leads the House of Commons, and rules as master, King, Cabinet, and Peers; overwhelmed, even more than before, with business and cares. But now he has got a holiday, and is bent on enjoying it; and he has with him, as his choice companion, the same playful friend. They are now in that pleasant park of Holwood, with its gnarled oaks, aged thorns, and folds of ground, that stretches to the north of the chalk hills of Holmesdale, where dwell the men of Kent: pleasant retreat for a statesman; carrying him, in a few hours, from Downing Street, and its crowd of suitors and colleagues, to woodland scenes, where smoke, noise, and intrigues do not enter; to plain cottages, where homely peasants live, who never saw St. Stephen's, nor care to pace the

pavement of Downing Street, or to climb the staircases of Whitehall.

In these woods the two friends wander—so opposite yet so intimate, oddly dressed, as if they would borrow country fashions, yet betraying, as they work with spuds and bill-hooks, and try to clear paths through the underwood, that they have little skill in handicraft, and do an awkward work with unpractised hands. Health at least they gain, and freedom from care; and now, hot and tired, they throw themselves under the twisted oak, to talk with that grave young statesman who has joined them, full of foreign affairs, despatches, and protocols from France, Russia, and Holland.

Yet, as we look at Pitt's companion, we are sensible that there is a change. Blithe and playful as ever, to Pitt even warmer and more friendly, yet changed in look and manner, gentler and more subdued—a check laid on the spirits when they run too fast—a hold on the bridle, which shows the master's hand—the gaiety as joyous, the voice as musical; but a look at times of thought, that passes lightly over, marking and shading the sky. Now he is in full converse with Pitt. One question engages them both. The one advises, the other hesitates. Shall he take up the question of Slavery? Is it his duty? Is it feasible? He is willing; but has he the power? The question presses, but is so vast; urgent, but so hard; such opponents — mercantile adventure, interest, prejudice, the aristocracy, the Court, the heads of the Law, and the King—a host of enemies, and how few

friends. Fox will indeed be with him, and Grenville, and Pitt, himself a host, and the rising sympathy of thoughtful men. So, as they stretch themselves on the grass under the old oak in council, the matter is discussed and fixed, and Wilberforce makes up his mind, and the work of his life begins.

Again the scene changes, and from the dry slopes and breezy woods of Holwood Park we pass to the dust and din of Palace-yard; not the Palace-yard of our day, with its cleared space and open square, where you look up at the towers and Tudor façade of Barry's costly pile, but in front of the old houses of Parliament, as they stood half-a-century ago, after they had seen the changes of many generations. In front of these stand cumbrous carriages and heavy-wigged coachmen, drunken drivers with lumbering hackney coaches and blind battered horses. Beyond the entrance to the abbey, where England lays in honour her warriors, statesmen, and poets, stands the house of Bankes, the orthodox, the respected Tory member. But near it another house attracts greater notice, for its bell is always tinkling, and the knocker never still; up the crowded door-step and down again there flows a stream of men, which runs on without stopping from morning to night; and such queer visitors, black and white, rosy-faced Saxons and woolly-haired Africans; bustling warm men from the city, spruce peers and baronets from the west end, stout squires from Yorkshire, broad-cloth manufacturers from Bradford and Leeds, broad-brimmed quakers from London, York, and Norwich, yellow-faced nabobs who have been burnt

under the tropics; and mixed with these, black-coated clergymen, and grave dignitaries, and smooth-shaven preachers of many sects. Here you meet that stout Scotchman, East India Director, Mr. Grant, whose sons are just beginning to be noticed; and that stern silent man, with quick step and keen grey eyes, the father of a son more famous, Zachary Macaulay; and that grave austere banker, whose word the City of London takes as a bond, who has a name and note in the House of Commons —Henry Thornton; and that long, shy, bashful clergyman, Mr. Gisborne, who comes up unwillingly from his Staffordshire woods; and that stout portly dean, Milner, who walks and talks as if he had borrowed the voice of Dr. Johnson; and that gentle layman, Mr. Babington, from Leicestershire; and the acute and energetic William Smith, member for Norwich; and the courteous peer from the hills of Cumberland, Lord Muncaster. That quick step and keen legal eye belong to Mr. Stephen. Mixed with these, you have the bustling Secretary of the Treasury, and the eagle-eyed Scotchman with his broad accent, omnipotent to the north of the Tweed; and then (for the House is up) a notable pair, the tall figure of the Premier, with the ruddy features, cheerful voice, and pleasant joke of Addington. The owner of the house, who draws to himself, by some moral magnetism, all this concourse, who would gather men if he lived in a desert, and who collects this crowd from the rolling tide of men and affairs in London—is in this stir from early morning to latest night, never at rest, yet never tired; listening,

questioning, suggesting, throwing out lights of fancy and gleams of kindness; talking more than most men, yet hearing and doing more;—he has neither birth, nor blood, nor ancestry, nor rank; yet he keeps all this mass of mind in movement, and gives to it, by his energy, its impulse and power.

Noting this spectacle, and struck with it, we look to the great House opposite, and ask, what is his influence there? Of Pitt and Fox and Burke, Lord North and Windham, Sheridan and Grenville, we have heard. These men were, or are, ministers; but this man is no minister, nor has he a chance of place. Has he any power in the House of Commons? Enter and see. We cross the street and take our places under the gallery. What a scene! what a crowded house! every corner full! no seat vacant! We look to the left of the Speaker's chair; there sits Erskine, who thinks all the world is looking at him. There you notice the coarse face of Sheridan; there the accomplished Windham; there are the heirs of the houses of Devonshire and Fitzwilliam, and the aristocratic looks of Howick, and the courteous smile of Lord Henry Petty. There, in the broad forehead and slovenly figure, you detect Charles Fox; behind him are young Whitbread and Burdett, and a host of rising men. We turn to the Treasury bench. Secretaries and Lords of the Treasury and Admiralty are there,—Rose, Ryder, Percival, and Bathurst, and the fine features of Lord Castlereagh, and Canning's sparkling eyes. But we pass them all, to dwell on that tall figure, which again has resumed its old place, and sits once more

the Premier of England. Still in his prime, not much changed; weaker, it may be, in force, but the weakness is concealed; the voice still grand, and the gesture lofty, and the high imperial will. For the ministry of Pitt is formed, but is in danger; he is now, as once he was in youth, almost alone. Dundas is no longer there, he has gone to the House of Peers; Grenville, once his colleague, has become his opponent; and Addington, also among the Peers, has his separate squadron, doubtful and dissatisfied. They hang loose on the Premier's flank. Yet, firm and bold, and proud as ever, Pitt is about to fight one of his last great battles, well-nigh alone. And to-night is the fight on which hangs his fate. For the Opposition have mustered strong, and their case is good, and the cry loud, and the charge weighty. It is likely to go hard with the Government. The attack is on the first Lord of the Admiralty; and Lord Melville, if not criminal, has been careless. So the debate grows keen; the charge is vehement and repeated; speech follows speech; cheers like artillery roll out their vollies; and the Addingtons and Bathursts desert, and leave the Premier's flank naked; and Fox and Sheridan and Whitbread, confident and counting on victory, rise to higher flights of eloquence, and press their triumphant attacks. Now all the leaders of the Opposition have spoken, and the Premier rises to defend himself: how ably, eloquently, and forcibly, the House well knows.

But he sits down, and the end is near, and the cry is loud for the vote; just then there rises from the extremity of the Treasury bench a slight figure, now

well known, and instantly to cries and noise succeeds a dead silence. Every one wants to know what this man thinks, for on his view will turn many votes, and perchance the majority. As he opens his lips, the countenance of the Premier turns to him anxiously, and his eye is fixed upon him with a look almost imploring. For he knows him to be his friend; he has proved him a true friend: when others fled, he was constant; when colleagues failed, he was true; he trusted him as he has trusted no one else, and he has told his thoughts to him as he did to no other man. But though sure of his friendship, he cannot reckon on his vote; for this friend, immovable in his affections, is unswerving in his fealty to duty. And if truth and right are against Government, he will follow these, and leave his friend. Pitt has felt this before. He proved it during the French war, when Wilberforce separated from him, and took the side of Fox, and raised his voice for peace. That variance ceased, the old friendship remained; and Pitt, always generous, only loved his friend the more. But this habit makes the verdict doubtful. So Pitt listens breathless, and waits tremulously for Wilberforce's judgment. At length it comes. He had risen late, as though he would hear all that could be said on both sides, especially by Pitt himself, the great master of argument. He had watched the debate with his finely-balanced mind. He had weighed the arguments in the scales of a judgment at times too sensitive, yet always upright. The speeches of the Opposition had not greatly moved him. Their declamation, their invective, their bitter

taunts, their party bias, he had detected and put aside. Their stormy passions could not move that serene and equable mind. He had known these great debaters too long to be misled by them. The rhetoric of Sheridan, the bitter vigour of Grey, the wary prudence of Lord Henry Petty, the subtle casuistry of Fox, he had often heard, and had confronted and exposed. These attacks poured upon the staggering minister, brought to bear on a doubtful culprit, were more keen than true. But the question was judicial, and the defence had not satisfied him. It seemed to him imperfect; the pleaders for Government had not made out their case. But the speech of Mr. Pitt was yet to come. In his argument Wilberforce might find the pleas for which he waited anxiously. That speech was now over, and the whole case was before him. He must now make up his mind, and speak. At length he rose; the House hung on his lips, and both its great leaders, Pitt on one side, Fox on the other, watched every word. Then, with an emotion which he could not hide, but a force of argument which everyone felt, he gave his reasons for a firm but reluctant verdict against Lord Melville. Loud were the cheers of the Opposition: to him, indeed, these gave no pleasure; nor the vote, nor the result, nor the rapture of the majority. And when he saw Pitt's emotion, he writhed to think how sharp had fallen the blow, which could wring signs of pain from that unbending mind.

Arguments, indeed, to take a different course were not wanting to Wilberforce. Might he not look forward to the effects of his decision? Was not this

forecast his duty? Would not his vote be fatal to Pitt's ablest colleague? Might it not overthrow Pitt himself? In Pitt Wilberforce had the highest confidence. Of his patriotism he had a deep conviction. His purity of motive he felt to be as memorable as his power. Pitt had left office on a public principle. He had resumed it for public ends. The voice of his country, and its dangers, had recalled him. Among those who rejoiced most in his return was Wilberforce. He thought him the man best fitted for the post and the times. Yet he himself was about to give a vote which must cripple, and might crush him. Was this necessary? Was it right? Was he bound to do this? Might he not leave the house? Even if he voted, might he not be silent? His silence might save the Government. But he never hesitated, and, with all his tendency to doubt, he never doubted. He was sitting as a judge, and as a judge he decided. Loyalty and truth called on him to speak, and he spoke his mind sadly, but without hesitation.

Pass a few years, and we again find the same man. He is still in the House of Commons. The house is again full and excited. There is a great concourse; it is the close of an important struggle. There is no doubt, indeed, as to the decision of the House. No even balancing of parties: still a bitter minority; but a majority overwhelming. The Treasury bench is full; but it is changed. We look along it in vain for its old occupants. Canning is not there, nor Castlereagh, nor Ryder, nor Rose; and the tall, rigid figure is gone. Has he retired

once more to the pillar on the fourth bench? We look up, but he is absent. The majestic voice and the splendid gesture of Pitt will never appear again in the House of Commons. His rival, too, is gone. Those subtle arguments, and that torrent of bursting words, will not again electrify the House. Both sleep in the Abbey opposite. On the Treasury bench sit new men: Lord Howick, and Lord Henry Petty, and Lord Milton, and the friends of Addington and Grenville. Behind are Romilly and Horner. But the Bill which is passing is proposed by Government, and that measure, for which Pitt and Fox spoke in vain, is now floating with a vast majority through the Houses of Parliament. The author of the measure, who has worked at it for twenty long, weary years, sits by, quiet and thankful. His labours are over; he has only to observe the Bill as it glides into port. One last eloquent speech, and his task is finished. Yet on him, on this evening, all eyes are fixed; through England and Scotland prayers are rising for him; and over the continent of Africa, and the Western world, thousands of black sufferers have learned to pronounce and bless his name. At last an earnest man rises in the House of Commons to express in a few words what thousands feel, and Romilly, dropping the reserve of legal habits, points to the man before them, as the apostle of humanity; contrasts his bloodless victory with Napoleon's triumphs; and, as he paints him laying his head on his pillow with thoughts of thankfulness, welcomed joyfully in his home by children and friends, a con-

trast to the lurid splendour of a despot's throne, surrounded by crouching slaves and abject kings, the House, touched by the contrast, bursts into a hurricane of cheers.

Let us turn back to other incidents. The scene on Wimbledon Heath occurred in the spring of 1783. Events in those days came thick and quick. Wilberforce had entered Parliament in the autumn of 1780. He was joined there, a few months after, by the young Pitt. Fox was at that time in vigorous opposition to Lord North, and now both Pitt and Fox thundered against the Government. Lord North's ministry had stood thus far, but signs of weakness began to appear. Both at home and abroad the rigid system of George III. began to give way. We now know that, but for the king's obstinacy, Lord North would have yielded several years before. The American disasters brought matters to a crisis; at home, also, the old system had become untenable. It had been plain for some time that a change was at hand. The petitions for economic reform, the success of Burke's Bill, the popularity of Reform, marked that the long winter frost was breaking, and that the thaw of spring-time had set in. The young member for Hull exemplified the altered opinions of the country. He had entered Parliament an independent member. He owed his seat to his own position, and the influence of his family. He had been opposed by Lord North's Government, and opposed by the Whig junto. He had defeated both, and now, separate from either, he sat one of forty members who called themselves Independents. This

fact gave a turn to his future life. For thus he came to view politics without a strong party bias. His first inclination led him to support the Tory Government. He voted for a time with Lord North. But early in 1782 he was convinced that Lord North's policy was dangerous, and he changed his side, and united with the Opposition. He was now an active member of the phalanx that was ranged against Lord North, and he made his first speeches by the side of Pitt, in support of the motions of Fox and General Conway. In March, Lord North's Government fell, and the six months' ministry of Lord Rockingham succeeded, to which Wilberforce gave an independent support. When, on the death of the Whig chief, Fox threw up office, Lord Shelburne succeeded to the premiership in December 1782, and as Pitt, who was now Wilberforce's most intimate friend, became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Shelburne ministry in the Commons, Wilberforce naturally appeared as a supporter of the new Government. But that ministry was as short-lived as its predecessor. It came into office before Christmas; it had disappeared by Easter. It went successfully through the short winter session, but by the middle of February, 1783, the arrangements for a coalition were complete, and after a vehement struggle, in which Wilberforce took an active part, and seconded the address approving the peace, the Shelburne Government fell, and on the 2nd April the Coalition ministry entered office.

The very day after this event, the two friends were found in that villa at Wimbledon Heath, which we

have described. There they amused themselves like boys, in fun and frolic; foined in the garden, strolled in evening walks, sat up in close talk till past midnight, and, after debates in the House, or evenings at the Opera or the theatre to hear Mrs. Siddons, they returned late, to rid themselves of care, and dust, and politics in the invigorating air of that breezy heath.

In the autumn of the same year, the friends went to visit George Bankes in Dorsetshire, and then crossed to France, to see the country with which England had been at war, and which was now entering on those curious changes which attracted the notice of thoughtful men. Pitt received distinguished attention at the Court of the Tuileries, where the Queen was then in the blaze of her beauty; had flattering compliments from the ladies of the French Court, with a hint that he might marry Necker's daughter, with a large fortune; and was eagerly questioned by statesmen and philosophers, by Necker, Noailles, and Lafayette, by Marmontel and Condorcet, as to our constitution and our national fortunes, which had startled and puzzled foreigners. Nor did Wilberforce escape his share of notice; for they could question him with greater freedom, and his lively temper suited Frenchmen better than his companion's reserve.

Indeed, at all times Wilberforce was remarked for his powers of conversation. Long after, when reflection had tamed his spirit, and years had subdued his natural fire, Madame de Staël, herself the most eloquent talker of her day, eagerly sought Wilberforce's

society, and pronounced him by far the wittiest man whom she met in England. In truth, from early life, he was the nursling of society. In society he was bred and brought up. By men more than by books his mind was formed. Whether at Cambridge or in London, his resort was to the rooms of friends, and his recourse was to their conversation. A chat with a college companion, an evening in a social circle, was far preferred by him to learned folios, or belles lettres, or active sport. Frivolous and indolent he was not; but neither was he a student. He had no love of books for themselves. If he read, it was that he might pick up what he required in order to converse—information which placed him abreast of society. Men, their ways and words, were his delight. But, though thus in one sense idle, he was well informed; for a nature singularly bountiful made up to him for the lack of study. A quick wit, prompt observation, a glance of natural intuition, brought to him, without effort, what other men gain by labour. A lively perception, fancy ever on the wing, thoughts bright and versatile, that fluttered from spray to spray, obtained for him without trouble what others gain by research and pains. So that, while he seemed to live only for amusement, he was, in fact, gaining stores of information, laying them up in his capacious memory, and keeping all under his hand ready for use. But he had other qualities, the gifts of a kindly nature: a temper singularly cheerful, a flow of spirits salient as a spring, a kindliness that made him sympathise with

others, a disposition easily pleased, and ready to give pleasure. To his own sex he was acceptable from his talents for conversation; to the fairer sex a chivalrous courtesy and deference endeared him. So his entrance into a room was like the introduction of light; at the first sound of the musical voice, ennui departed, and dulness made itself wings and flew away. The listless brightened into activity, and depressed spirits rose under his contagious cheerfulness.

From Paris, at this time, both friends were recalled. Pitt was summoned by express to London. Wilberforce soon followed; for one of the sudden storms, which sweep across our political sky, was at hand, and this touched the fortunes of both the friends. The history of Fox's East India Bill is known—its provisions and supposed objects, the king's alarm, the royal interference, the defeat of the government in the Lords, the expulsion of the government from office, the new ministry under Pitt, who took and held office in the teeth of a decided majority in the Commons. Then was seen the strange spectacle of a youth of twenty-four ruling both the Court and Parliament, contending single-handed against a majority in the Lower House, and fighting, almost alone, against the greatest debaters of the day, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, and Lord North. With these public matters, however, we do not concern ourselves, except as they touch our subject.

In the struggle, Mr. Wilberforce showed the tact which rarely deserted him. The new ministry

had entered office at Christmas, 1783. "It will be a mince-pie administration," said the witty Mrs. Crewe to the member for Hull. He did not agree with her; when he took his place as the supporter of Government, he differed from many of his own party of Independents. They sided with Fox and Lord North. But before the fight was over, they had discovered their mistake. They found that the voice of the people was with Pitt, not with the Coalition.* The struggle within Parliament lasted three months. The majority, which backed the Coalition in January, was 54. In March it sank to a majority of one, and then became a minority. On the 12th of January, 232 members stood by Fox and Lord North. In March, the phalanx had dwindled to 171. At first, Fox had threatened to stop the supplies, to reject the Mutiny Bill, and to impeach the Minister. By the end of March, these threats had vanished, the supplies and Mutiny Bill were safe. Then it was seen how sagaciously Wilberforce had gauged the public feeling. At first the people had been torpid; but as the fight waxed hot, public interest rose, county meetings were held, cities assembled, addresses of confidence poured in to the Minister, corporations voted him thanks, the Company of the Goldsmiths feasted him, the Corporation of the City of London* voted him the freedom of the City, and invited him to a public dinner. The Lord Mayor and Aldermen went in procession to his house in Berkeley Square;

* Gentlemen's Magazine, Vol. liv., Part i., pp. 204—225.

and it was noticed as a significant sign, that Wilkes, the idol of the people, was the spokesman who offered Pitt the thanks of the Corporation, and praised him as energetically as Beckford had praised Lord Chatham. It was also noticed that the procession was followed by crowds, who rent the air with huzzas; and that, when Pitt accepted the invitation, and drove to dine in the City, the people took the horses from his carriage, and drew him in triumph through the streets.

These events brought the young member for Hull upon a new stage, and opened for him that place in public life which he afterwards used for great ends. The year 1784 presents to us one of those political hurricanes, of which, since the Restoration, England has seen many—Abhorrers and Petitioners, Whigs and Tories, Reformers and Anti-reformers. The country was ranged into two camps, and parties were ready to come to blows. England was astir with public meetings, corporation addresses, and petitions. One party were eager for the Coalition, for the rights of the House of Commons, for the privileges of the majority. The other party were as hot for the King, for his prerogative, for his throne, for the young Premier and the Cabinet.

In this excitement, many counties had met to petition, but one great county, Yorkshire, had not yet pronounced; yet Fox used to say, that in politics Middlesex and Yorkshire made up England. Middlesex was against the Coalition; but what would Yorkshire do? If Yorkshire the chances were against the Government, for in that county

the Coalition had great strength. Some of its chief families went with Lord North; and the old Whig influence was strong. Lord Rockingham's great estates were there, and he had returned the county members from his dining-room. The Dukes of Norfolk and Devonshire, Lord Carlisle, and Sir George Savile had large bodies of retainers. On this occasion, these families put forth all their resources, and employed their agents, as though they were preparing for an election.

The 25th of March, 1784, was appointed for the Yorkshire county meeting. On that day Mr. Wilberforce determined to be present, with the secret hope, as he afterwards confessed, that that meeting might affect his own fortunes. In the early morning the Coalition mustered strong; as far as the eye could reach, an enormous multitude filled the Castle-yard at York. There the hustings were set up; and round the High Sheriff's chair, which was in the centre, the Whig leaders took their places. They were men of mark in public life. Lord Fitzwilliam, indeed, was new to Parliament; but he represented Lord Rockingham's high repute and fortunes, and he had been just brought before the public as First Commissioner in the India Bill. Lord Carlisle was there, able and accomplished; Lord Surrey came fresh from the debates of the House of Commons, in which he had taken a leading part; and there was Lord George Cavendish, who had held the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. These were adroit speakers, eager to speak for their followers, and, backed by their voices, to defend the Coalition. On

the other side, an address approving of the Minister was brought forward by some country gentlemen, little known to each other or to the public; and they encountered difficulties which might have baffled more practised speakers; for they found that within their own ranks there was a great diversity of sentiment. One section of their party was composed of country gentlemen, fox-hunting squires, strong Tories, men of old prejudice and a dull, blind loyalty. They had come forward to support the King and the Constitution, reckoning the friends of the Coalition disloyal traitors. But there was another section, by far the strongest, who had no sympathy with these views. They were men of broadcloth, yeomen, woollen manufacturers, thriving traders, who had set up the Yorkshire Reform Association, had clamoured for Burke's Bill of Economical Reform, and who now followed Mr. Wyvill in his demand for Parliamentary Reform. These persons had no feeling in common with the Tory squires. They liked Pitt, because he was a Reformer, a Free-trader, and the enemy of official jobs. They supported him because he had beat both the Oligarchy and the Court. It was hardly possible to speak with success the sentiments of both these sections. If you satisfied the one, you gave dire offence to the other: and a remark from a speaker was sure to draw out a storm of hisses from one of the sections on his own side, as well as from his opponents. So the meeting grew disorderly, and the day wore on in tumult. At last it became impossible for any one to make himself heard. The

weather, too, was, like the meeting, stormy. It was a gusty day, the wind blowing hail and sleet in men's faces, and blasts of wind mixed themselves with gusts of vociferation. Hence, after the leaders had spoken, the meeting became unmanageable, the packed crowd fell into disorder, and it appeared likely that this great gathering, instead of petitioning against the Coalition, would break up or melt away; or, if the Whigs stood firm, their side would carry the vote.

At this critical moment, when the disorder was at its height, there rose on the table, in front of the High Sheriff's chair, a singular figure, so slight that it seemed to wave to and fro with the gusts of the blast. The person who presented himself was ill-fitted for such a place; for he was slender, with a countenance not commanding, and so near-sighted that he could not see his audience clearly. He was also an entire stranger; among that vast multitude, a single clergyman in the crowd was the only one who even knew his name. But when he opened his lips, there issued forth a voice so musical and clear, that it passed over the crowd like a silver trumpet, and was heard to the furthest edge of the meeting. The clear sounds rivetted attention, and when men were thus interested, they were held fast by the words. For the speaker had, in greater perfection than most men, that rare quality of an orator, the tact with which to discern at a glance the temper of his audience, and to suit his words to their thoughts. He had observed the feelings of the meeting, and had noticed the discordant opinions

that prevailed among the petitioners. He now took these into his hands. Brushing aside the points on which the sections of his party differed, he fastened their eyes on the points on which they agreed, the objects of the Coalition, and its designs. Its leaders stood before them; he could point his charges at these. Their ambition, their intrigues, their unrighteous compact, formed a monster in politics, stamped, as he said, with the features of both its parents, the corruption of the one, the violence of the other, the hideousness of both. This was the onslaught the meeting wanted. Here, at last, both sections could agree; Tories as well as Reformers found here a common ground; and, catching with passionate enthusiasm the speaker's words, they hailed them with transports of applause. Cheer followed cheer, hisses were drowned by shouts; the vote was called for, and the Address was carried.

While the orator spoke, men asked each other who he was; and there passed from lip to lip a name then unknown, soon to be a household word—the name of Wilberforce. While he was speaking, an express from Mr. Pitt reached him with a dispatch, which he opened on the platform. It announced that on that very day Parliament would be dissolved. Then, men whispered to each other, "We'll have this man for our county member." When the meeting broke up, a committee of the leaders remained, which sat at the York Tavern, and announced Wilberforce and Duncombe as their candidates. Differences were dividing them, when again the tact of the young candidate interposed to reconcile them. The Whigs

put forward, as their candidates, two men of wealth and local influence; but the middle classes started up; the great cities of Yorkshire, since well known in parliamentary warfare, took up Wilberforce's cause; offers of money and of votes poured in to his committee; Leeds welcomed him; Bradford and Rotherham received him with open arms; Halifax followed Leeds; Sheffield united with Barnsley and Wakefield. The West Riding was soon in a flame, and so strong was the popular sentiment, that the Whig candidates declined the contest. On the 7th of April, the stripling, whose face and name were unknown a fortnight before, rode, girt with his sword, to the Castle of York, and was declared member for Yorkshire. The splendid prize, which Henry Brougham secured as the reward of a long public life, fell in early youth to Wilberforce. The elections went in favour of the Government; one hundred and sixty members of the Coalition party lost their seats, and were called Fox's Martyrs; and the election of 1784, like that of 1833, achieved a political change which marks an epoch in the history of England. Henceforth the Whig and Tory oligarchy lost their power, which passed by degrees to new forces entering on the arena of politics.

Among the majority which met in London on the 14th May, 1784, one of the most remarked was the young member for Yorkshire, who, as the intimate friend of the Premier, and the man whose eloquence had influenced largely the election, held a position that placed office and honours, if he desired them, within his reach. Yet, at this very time, as he him-

self has told us, in the heyday of his success, when, after returning from a busy session of Parliament, he was received and *fêted* by his Yorkshire constituents, and retired in the autumn to the Lakes to enjoy a short season of rest, with ample fortune, youth, and brilliant prospects before him, he found to his surprise, that, when a few days' quiet threw him on his own resources apart from society, a more listless, weary, wretched wight was not to be found within the four corners of England.

CHAPTER III.

A YORKSHIRE FAMILY: THE MILNERS.

THE county of York is one of the features of England. It has the largest area and the greatest population. Since the development of its manufactures, and the influence of its population under a system of Parliamentary Reform, its political importance is augmented. It is inhabited by a hardy race, who have in their character, as in their dialect, traces of their Anglo-Saxon blood. It possesses every natural gift and appliance which can strengthen this character. To the north and north-west, it presents those limestone strata which form the boldest scenery; and the rivers which flow between its wolds, and water its dales—the Swale, the Ure, the Wharfe, and the Nid—have been celebrated by the pencil of our greatest painter Turner; the wide sweep of these Yorkshire wolds, which enclose the most various natural beauties, and are adorned by castles, abbeys, and churches, was never seen by him without emotion. On the eastern side, her limestone mountains form high moors, and end in gigantic cliffs, which meet and defy the waves. Her bluff promontories stand the dashing of the German Ocean; and the wind, which blew the Danish invaders to our

shores, spends itself still on those grand headlands which, from the Spurn to Flamborough Head, and northward from this to Whitby, line the picturesque coast. The rivers, which flow through her rich valleys, and fertilize as well as beautify the soil, find a splendid embouchure in the estuary of the Humber. To the south-west are stored those mineral treasures which nature has given so largely to this favoured county, and these have collected dense masses of population, hives of industry, and stores of wealth. This part of Yorkshire is indeed covered thick with the smoke of towns; the intersecting courses of communication carry rapidly her busy population to various points; and, not inferior in industry to the county of Lancaster, she offers, as rivals to the traffic of Rochdale, Bolton, Ashton, and Manchester, her cities of Leeds and Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield, Pontefract, Wakefield, Rotherham, and Sheffield.

Nor is history wanting to this northern kingdom, nor romance, nor art. The greatest Minster of which England can boast, is planted in the city by the side of the Ouse. The Minster of Beverley contributes a splendid example of early art; while Fountains Abbey presents the graces of Norman and Early English architecture, set off by a landscape of exquisite charm. The wild romance of Robin Hood and his outlaws illustrates the Yorkshire forests. Some of the most stirring achievements of English history —the victory of Edward over the Lancastrians, of Fairfax over the Cavaliers — the fierce fights of Marston Moor—the royal gathering, the setting up

of the royal standard, the firm and unyielding defence of Hull—occurred in the county of York.

From such a county, filled with such a race, we should expect examples in every department of industry, and every achievement of genius. Indeed, Yorkshire has reason to be proud of her sons. They have given to our various professions examples of successful exertion. Those, who go among them as strangers to settle in their county, are struck by one feature of their character. They find in it a fund of shrewd strong sense, and of watchful observation. The natives follow a stranger, who plants himself among them, whether as a clergyman or a layman, with a quiet but observant eye. If they find reason to distrust or dislike him, the longest life, the most strenuous efforts, will not change their opinion; but, on the other hand, if he wins their confidence, their attachment is deep, and not lightly to be shaken: he has made friends for life, and their friendship is not in word, but in deed—fast, fervent, and true.

A type of this Yorkshire character was supplied in one who, though a humble mechanic, gained through his sons a just reputation. In the heart of Leeds, that busy centre of a busy world, lived and worked at the loom, more than a hundred years ago, a sturdy mechanic of the name of Milner, who had to make his bread by the sweat of his brow, and who thus brought up by homely labour a numerous family. He had tried his hand in business, and had not been successful; so he settled down to handicraft. This only he was resolved upon—he would

give his children a good education. At times, with this object in view, he tried not a little the patience of his shrewish wife; for she, though a clever Yorkshire woman, was blessed with rather an acid temper. The father sent home on one Saturday evening, instead of the expected joint for the Sunday dinner, a Greek book which he had bought for his eldest boy; and fasting was not found pleasant by the hungry family, though garnished with Greek. It tried not a little the temper of the dame; but the plan answered.

Of the three sons, who were born to the rough Yorkshireman, two, the eldest and the third, rewarded his pains. They had remarkable natural gifts, which, when cultivated, led to fortune. The father was a Quaker, but he sent his sons to the grammar school of Leeds to be taught by the clergy; and the eldest son, Joseph, born in 1744, though a sickly child, (for several years his life was precarious,) attracted the notice of the head master, an accomplished clergyman, by his quickness in learning and his marvellous memory. The master, who was not in that respect particularly strong, learned to rely on his pupil's memory, and to refer to him on all occasions. He sounded his praises through the Leeds society, and at last he so far interested a number of persons, that the boy obtained employment in tuition, and at length assistance which enabled him to go to Cambridge. There he soon distinguished himself. He passed from the university to be assistant in the school of another Yorkshire clergyman, and finally he obtained by

fair competition the head mastership of the grammar school of Hull. Before he had obtained this appointment, his father was dead, and his mother, straitened by poverty, had to send her third boy to earn his bread at the loom. But he too had gained some good from his father's resolution. He had been sent early (at six years old) to the same grammar school which had received his elder brother; and, as he possessed strong natural gifts, resolution, and a thirst for learning, he had, during his short season of instruction, picked up a smattering of Greek and a fair knowledge of Latin. Lying beside his loom the curious might see a Tacitus and a Greek book; and a wall near his father's house bore witness to his mathematical tastes, in a well-delineated sundial. When his elder brother was set free from poverty, he resolved that his younger brother should share his fortune. He released him forthwith from the drudgery of the loom, and sent him as a sizar to Queen's College, Cambridge. There the lad, who had wrought with his own hands, and who at one time seemed destined to the life of a mechanic, when he took his degree in 1774, came out Senior Wrangler and first Smith's Prizeman, and was pronounced, by a singular distinction, *incomparabilis*. Ordained in the following year, he was soon after elected Fellow and Tutor of his College. When he took his degree of Bachelor of Divinity, he kept his Act with such ability as to puzzle not only his opponent, but his judge. Among the members of the Debating Society, which enrolled Watson and Paley, he took a prominent place; and his communications to the Royal

Society on abstruse questions of mathematics, and on questions of chemistry and astronomy, were, with his other attainments, such as to procure for him, at the age of thirty, the distinction of Fellow. He passed through various positions at Cambridge —Public Lecturer on Chemistry, Jacksonian Professor, Member of the Board of Longitude—till, in 1788, the office of President of Queen's College became vacant, and Isaac Milner was appointed to it. Three years after, through the influence of the Bishop of Lincoln, he was nominated to the Deanery of Carlisle. Soon after he became Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge; and the year of his Vice-Chancellorship was distinguished by the trial, and expulsion from the University, of William Friend, Fellow of Jesus, whose Socinian opinions caused public scandal, and tinged with a strong influence the wavering mind of Coleridge. In learning, and in mathematical and mechanical acquirements, Dean Milner was distinguished. In the autumn of 1798, he was elected to the Mathematical Chair in Cambridge, and his company was eagerly sought by men of learning and science. Paley and Porson frequented his rooms, and delighted in his talk; and his powers of attracting youth, not so much by his manners, which were stern, or by his deportment, which, like Dr. Johnson's, was rough and formidable, but by the skill with which he adapted himself to their minds, and laid himself out to inform and interest them, has been attested by Macaulay, when he visited the President's lodge, a boy from school. Milner's powers as a preacher were remarkable.

His style was vigorous; his words weighty, with a certain old-fashioned quaintness; his matter abundant, and conveyed in strong pithy Saxon; his manner full of vivacity. Acute observers, members of the Northern Circuit, heard him in the cathedral of Carlisle with delight; and a judge, so shrewd and hard to please as Dr. Paley, writes, "When the Dean of Carlisle preaches, you may walk upon the heads of the people." Persons of different denominations flocked round his pulpit, and men of every class listened to him with interest.

But these powers, fruits of a vigorous intellect and strong character, were accompanied with some infirmities. Though a man of a strong frame, tall, coarse, and apparently robust, he was a martyr during his life to attacks of severe illness. Violent headaches prostrated him; an intermittent pulse alarmed his physicians, and threatened the springs of life. A bachelor like his brother, he fell early into bachelor ways—impatient of noise and bustle, or any great change from his usual habits of life. He complained of his infirmities of temper, and at times betrayed a constitutional irritability. He reproached himself also (though these faults were at length greatly subdued) with an eager desire for distinction, and the pride which grows strongest in a strong soil, rising often out of the same root as the self-reliance which the consciousness of strength imparts. When pursuing his chemical experiments, working out a mathematical problem, or puzzling over a mechanical trick, he was so absorbed that his whole mind was concentrated, and could not be

diverted. He shared with Dr. Johnson a love of debate; and this habit is apt to lead men to seek victory rather than truth. But in this respect he excelled his illustrious predecessor; for his love of truth was so strong, that, even in the heat of discussion, he would not consciously desert her. The curiosity of both was great; though in Dr. Johnson it turned rather on men, their customs, morals, and manners: Dean Milner was attracted to mechanics; any invention excited his interest; the mechanical contrivance of the invisible girl, who astonished London at the beginning of the century in Leicester Fields, which he investigated till he found out the truth, is an amusing example of his scientific propensities.

In another point he resembled Dr. Johnson. The warmth of his affection and the tenderness of his sympathy were intense. When his friends were sad or suffering, there welled out a spring of affection from the depths of that rough nature. The fulness of his sympathy, the tenderness with which he administered comfort, and his gentle forbearance, endeared him to a wide circle of friends. Letters of his which remain, written to friends during times of trouble, attest the constancy of his friendships and the warmth of his heart. Yet these letters were written during the distractions of manifold business, often in fits of illness, and under the pressure of pain. He had owed, as we have seen, his start in life to the kindness of his elder brother, and to that brother he was attached with the attachment of a deep and

robust character. He himself, nothwithstanding his bodily infirmities, lived to the age of 70; his brother, whose constitution was feebler, and his labours more exhausting, died in his 54th year.

Joseph Milner, too, had derived from his parents, and from that sinewy Yorkshire race, a character that resembled somewhat that of his younger brother. He had the same strength, the same energy, with less of indolence, and greater perseverance. He had the same warm affections. He had, indeed, some of the same foibles: the same outspoken way of showing his likes and dislikes; and, though in conversation abundant and agreeable, when he found himself in uncongenial company, he had no mind to hide his distaste. When occupied with any object of interest, he was engrossed; and, apt to dwell on this, he did not always consider whether it was suited to the taste or capacity of his hearers. He was of a sanguine temperament, with a strong intellect and a consciousness of strength, and from both parents he inherited a temper more susceptible than serene. But his sense of duty was no less decided than his intellect, and to that sentiment he began early to subordinate his thoughts. What he did, he did with all his heart. Appointed to be head-master of the grammar school of Hull at the age of 24, he raised the school from the decay into which it had fallen, till he made it of repute, crowded with pupils. Nominated Lecturer by the Mayor and Corporation, he attracted crowds, and delighted all classes by a manly eloquence.

But soon after he had entered on these posts, his religious sentiments changed. Pride of intellect ceased; his bold self-reliance disappeared; the confident theologian became an inquirer; the scholar stooped; and the rough man of learning grew mild. His patrons, the aldermen, and the merchants in whose circle he had moved, did not relish the change. They had enjoyed his society; they remonstrated against his over-strictness; they blamed, and at last they renounced him. They avoided his company, and then they turned their back on his sermons. But the common people heard him gladly. They crowded round his pulpit; and to them, changing his style of thought and argument, and addressing them with the unction of devout feeling, he told a touching story, which won their hearts. A change, like that which had followed the ministry of Baxter at Kidderminster, passed over the commonalty of Hull. The profligate were ashamed; the drunkards were reformed; the careless were alarmed; the thoughtless became thoughtful. A new life passed across the dead society, and left behind it, through a radical renovation, the flush of moral verdure. Meanwhile the man who had produced this change, became only more humble and self-denying. He multiplied his labours. His afternoon lecture in the great church at Hull was followed by assiduous personal ministrations. The sick sent for him; the anxious came to him; men and women, tradesmen and servants, consulted him on questions of difficulty, or on scruples of conscience. Exhausting

himself in these labours, he spent his Sabbath afternoons; but he soon added to them a morning equally busy. Nine miles from Hull lies the village of Ferriby, near the Humber, occupied by the villas of the rich, and by the colony of tradesmen and labourers whom wealth draws after it. The endowment was scanty: £30 was the salary of the curate, and not much more rewarded the services of the vicar. But the field was important, and Mr. Milner thought little of the pay. He first became curate, then vicar; went on Sunday early to catechise the children in church, and followed this by the service and a sermon. Besides this, he preached in Hull once or twice a week, and his grammar school engaged him daily for five or six hours. To these labours he added diligent study; and in the latter part of his life he began the Church History, which, when his life prematurely ended, his brother completed. His conversation was through life attractive; and, though himself a bachelor, his love of children was so great, that the young delighted to gather round him, and friends and pupils made for the solitary man a fond family. Gradually, under the impression of his self-denying life, opposition to him abated, and obloquy ceased. He lived long enough to discover that his enemies had become his friends, and to receive, in his appointment to the vicarage of Hull, a practical testimony of the esteem of his fellow citizens. But he only lived to learn this; a few weeks after, he died at the age of 54, exhausted by labour.

He had not, however, reached this height of in-

fluence without a hard struggle. Severe in suspecting himself, careful in self-examination, he was stern in self-condemnation. Faults, which no human eye detected, he saw and deplored; and, while others wondered at his increasing labours, he humbled himself to the dust for his indolence and love of ease. Harassing doubts, strong temptations, tried the weary mind. His journals, meant for no eye but his own, reveal to us through what dark passages and dreary mists he had emerged into day-light. But his resolution to follow his conscience, to practise duty, and to persevere in prayer, never slackened. "Trust; wait; bear; expect." This we find the recorded motto of his life. "Follow on; thine is a promise that I shall not walk in darkness." This was the pilgrim's staff. "Prayed for satisfying light, and for strength to sit still." "Pity, Lord, and teach me real faith." "Bad tempers prevail; terrifying temptations; I experienced this day horrible temptations; various crosses confound me. . . . I find impatience, and even anger, in my professional duties." "What a sore destiny," he writes, "through stubborn corruptions; long sad darkness; all my life ensnared by leaning to my own understanding. . . . Constant struggle between slothfulness of the flesh and sense of duty."

But at length the light he had prayed for, broke on the patient mind. "I cry for deliverance, and am answered with encouraging views of Christ." "Christ is true goodness, and happiness must be in goodness. I have no good: if a little be put into

me, it is Christ's, not mine." "At length I seem to hear the voice of gracious answers: Christ is free for thy use, and Christ alone is thy happiness." "A sight of God in His real goodness gives confidence towards Him. At last I see many reasons for believing, and trusting patiently and confidently my soul in the hands of Christ." Hence, in his last letter, written to his brother on his death-bed, he says that resignation to the Divine will is the highest attainment of the Christian life; that it implies thorough trust in God, and love for Him; and this, he assures his brother, may be gained by habits of prayer, earnest seeking after God, with a willingness to give up all for Him. "Best," he says, "to be as a weaned child." It was this strong but chastened character that left on the mind of the younger brother a deep impression. He admired and esteemed him. Even where he did not imitate him, he revered him; and when his own temptations beset and overcame him, he always reverted to that model character which he regarded as embodying the graces of the Christian. He attended him when his frequent attacks of illness laid him prostrate. He loved to spend his vacations with him; and in his own illnesses he turned to him for counsel and comfort. The death of such a brother plunged Isaac Milner into the deepest affliction.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VERY REV. ISAAC MILNER, D.D., DEAN OF CARLISLE, AND PRESIDENT OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.—A STRANGE INCIDENT IN A PUBLIC LIFE.

But before this blow reached him, Dean Milner had formed an intimacy which was destined to exercise a lasting influence on the minds of two friends. Isaac Milner had become acquainted with Wilberforce when both were passing as undergraduates through their course at Cambridge. In after life they had drifted apart. The one had entered Parliament, and was engrossed with politics; the other became a Fellow of his College, a bachelor, somewhat of a recluse, a student and a scholar. In the summer of the year which saw Wilberforce representative for Yorkshire, the young member, after visiting his constituents and joining in the gaieties of York, retired to Scarborough for rest and bracing air. As he had determined on a foreign tour, in company with his mother and family, during the winter, he was in search of some companion to share his carriage. He offered the place to one friend, who declined; and then he offered it to Isaac Milner. He knew the elder Milner as a teacher and popular preacher; but these qualities were at that time to him no very high recommendations. The

younger Milner he had known intimately, and he was aware that he differed in his habits from the asceticism of his elder brother.

For, in truth, Isaac Milner, distinguished as he was by talent, was better known to his friends through his social qualities and powers of conversation. Like Dr. Johnson and other clever men, he had great constitutional indolence, and no love of work. To such a man conversation is a resource; it occupies the place of study, and it wears the semblance, while it supplies the stimulants, of business. The manners of Isaac Milner were unpolished; but a blunt manner often adds a pungency to clever talk. The broad Yorkshire dialect made fashionable circles stare; and the huge college wig, when the friends began to travel, sorely embarrassed French perruquiers; but these oddities were piquant, and added to the zest of intercourse. Of one thing Wilberforce felt assured, that no unnecessary strictness would arise on his companion's part, nor would morbid scruples disturb them. For the Cambridge Don had no opinions which restrained him from ordinary amusements, or kept him back from his share in the gaieties of life. In fact, when the friends arrived at Nice, the divine gave no help in the services of the Sunday; but he took his share in the dinners and parties usual on that day, and in the balls and amusements of the week he was an active partaker. Such a character suited perfectly the lively politician; with such a travelling companion he felt certain to be at ease.

But, though Isaac Milner had not yet made up his mind to the restraints of a religious life, and though on the surface no signs of special interest showed themselves, he was not without anxious reflections, the workings of conviction. With all his indolence and love of pleasure, he had a high sentiment of duty, and he was a man naturally of fearless courage and integrity. He was not satisfied with his own style of life. He could not help contrasting it with the course pursued by his elder brother. For, loving that brother as a son loves a father, he never would hear a word against him; and therefore he would not listen to any attack on the opinions and mode of life which his brother pursued, which, though he did not himself practise, in his heart he felt were reasonable. But of these latent feelings his light-hearted companion knew nothing when he asked him to join his party. Had he known what was passing in his mind, he would have sought a different companion; for Wilberforce had then no religious scruples, and was troubled by no anxieties. He was correct in his habits; he had no strong passions to disturb him. He was amiable, moral, upright. He had a great respect for religion, and his faith was orthodox. He went to church, like his neighbours, once on the Sunday. He was ready to do what his church required, and to give such alms as religion or benevolence exacted. What more? What further religion did any man need? So, when the character of a certain clergyman, styled a Methodist, was discussed at the public table at Scarborough, Wilberforce,

joining in the conversation, said he was a good man, but over strict; he carried things too far. "Not a bit too far," was the blunt answer of the Yorkshire divine; so at this point, and thus early, the friends differed. But that difference only sharpened their intercourse. They returned to the subject in discussion as they strolled on the Scarborough sands; and, as they went on their way in their travels, they often renewed the debate—amicably, indeed, but stoutly; for the Yorkshireman was not one to give in; and, conscious that truth was on his side, he would not flinch a jot from his point.

At first the discussion was desultory, a sort of tilting-match. Wilberforce took little serious interest in it, and only used it as a vehicle for jest; and he turned upon his friend his light artillery of wit. But this did not suit the graver temper of Milner. "I am no match for you, Wilberforce," he said, "in this running fire; but if you really wish to discuss these subjects seriously, I will gladly enter on them with you." Another incident occurred. "The Rise and Progress of Religion," by Doddridge, had been given to one of Wilberforce's fellow-travellers. Glancing over it one day, the lively youth asked Milner what sort of a book it was. "One of the best books ever written," was the answer; "let us read it together." Shut up in their carriage, in the long leisure of a continental tour, the book was read by them, and produced on both minds an impression. Some time or other Wilberforce resolved he would read the Bible carefully, and reconsider his course. But the thought was transient. The pleasures of

Nice dispelled it; and from Nice he was recalled by Parliamentary engagements to London, where for months he was absorbed in politics and pleasure, speaking in the House of Commons, living much with Pitt, and entering into the gay society of London. Midsummer came before he could tear himself away, and then he joined his friends in Switzerland, and resumed his intercourse with Milner. The debates between the friends were renewed, and, it was evident, with increasing interest; for Wilberforce had now reached the point from which Milner had started, and began to feel dissatisfaction with his present mode of life, and a secret wish for change. "Often, when in the full enjoyment of all that this world could bestow," says Wilberforce, "my conscience told me that, in the truer sense of the word, I was not a Christian. I laughed, I sang, I was apparently gay and happy; but the thought would steal across me, "What madness is all this, to continue easy in a state in which a sudden call out of the world would consign me to everlasting misery." He had, indeed, no violent passions to overcome, nor was he troubled with speculative doubts. He had been taught to regard Scripture as a Divine revelation, and as such he accepted it. "I had received into my understanding," he says, "the great truths of the Gospel, and I believed that its offers were free and universal." Examining Scripture more closely, he found in it a passage (St. Luke xi. 9 to 13) which, though he was not then aware of it, had been the first to fix the attention of John Newton. True, Newton's mind

had passed through a different course from Wilberforce's. It had been lacerated by passion, and scourged by infidel doubts; then it was steeped in unbelief, and from scepticism passed into despair. But this passage had first inspired Newton with hope. "Here I find a Spirit spoken of which was to be communicated to those who asked it. Upon this I reasoned thus:—If this Book is true, the promise in this passage must be true likewise. I have need of that very Spirit, by which the whole was written, in order to understand it aright. He has engaged here to give that Spirit to those who ask. I must, therefore, pray for it; and if it is of God, He will make good His own word."

Wilberforce's mind followed a similar course, with some characteristic differences. First came a careful study of the Bible; then reflection; and at last he was caught by the same words that had struck Newton,—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." "Let me test this statement. Any one may do so. I will. God has promised to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask for it. I will go down on my knees and ask. Such thoughts as these completely occupied my mind, and I began to pray earnestly."

It was on the 21st October, 1785, that the young politician reached this turning-point in his history. But, though his efforts to carry out his purpose were strenuous, they were not immediately followed by success. For many months he was in the deepest depression from convictions of guilt. "Indeed,

nothing which I have ever read in the account of others exceeded what I then felt." The struggle, however, ended sooner than in the case of Newton. For in Newton's case relapses had followed his first efforts, and a doubtful conflict of six years preceded the season of conviction and peace. But indications of altered feelings showed themselves early in the case of Wilberforce. The lively Mrs. Crewe noticed the change when they met at Spa. There were signs, also, which alarmed his mother. Why should he be constantly poring over his Greek Testament? What interest could he find in this constant study of the Bible? In November he returned to England, and settled at his villa on Wimbledon Heath; and as Parliament did not meet till February, he had an interval at his disposal, which he employed in pursuing the subject that engrossed him. He attended London churches, to hear the clergy who preached so as to meet his anxieties. He removed, after a time, to the Adelphi, in order to enjoy these opportunities more easily. He spent several hours daily in the study of Scripture; and he became, for the first time in his life, a diligent student of books. He abandoned the life of idle lounging which had hitherto diverted him. In the spring of 1786, notwithstanding his own self-distrust, he was able to detect some symptoms of mental progress. However downcast about himself, he was conscious that a change had taken place in his aims and tastes. Things which once pleased him pleased him no

longer; days and books and services which had been vapid, were now sources of delight.'

About this time, feeling satisfied that the change in his sentiments was real and settled, he opened himself on the subject of religion to Mr. Pitt. He told him that his affection for him was unchanged, that he still valued, and hoped to keep, his friendship, but that henceforth their paths in life would differ. In Parliament he must now do what he held to be right, and could no longer implicitly follow Pitt as leader. Pitt's answer was like himself—frank, kind, and generous. He could not, indeed, comprehend his friend's meaning: he thought he must be ill and out of spirits; that it was a temporary depression, from which he would soon rally. Why should he concern himself about religion, and give himself so much trouble? He himself had been always too busy for this, nor had he a mind to engage in it. What he had read on religion had only puzzled him. At Cambridge he had studied Butler's Analogy, and that clever book had raised in his mind more doubts than it had resolved. But whatever his friend did and thought, he would not give up his friendship. He had known him long; he valued him much. He made time, in the midst of his official business, to go to Wimbledon, and talk the matter over with Wilberforce. They parted on the best terms; and their friendship, unshaken, remained constant to the end. With other men differences intervened; but with Eliot and Wilberforce Pitt's regard knew no change, and the connexion of blood, which bound him to the one, was not closer than the confidence

which attached him to the other. So they renewed speedily their old relations of intimacy; they passed days together at Holwood. They dined *tête-à-tête* in Downing Street; they drove together to Wimbledon; and Pitt revealed to Wilberforce the secrets which he told to none but his Cabinet.

Indeed, while in many points religion made a decided change in the feelings of Wilberforce, the course of his public conduct was apparently unaffected. He withdrew his name from several fashionable clubs, and avoided the trifling society in which, up to this time, he had taken part; but he resumed his place in the House of Commons, and took up with renewed ardour the interests of his constituents and the work of Parliamentary life. In writing to a friend, he says,—"He had no intention to shut himself up from mankind, and immure himself in a cloister. My walk, I am sensible, is a public one; my business is in the world, and I must mix in assemblies of men, or quit the part which Providence seems to have assigned me." But when a leading constituent, Mr. Wyvill, urged him to come to Yorkshire, in order to put down by his presence the calumnies circulated against him, and to show that he was the same man as formerly, he replied, that he could not honestly say he was the same; he had undergone a great change; there were things which he could no longer do with a safe conscience, and restraints which he could not throw aside. This exposed him, of course, to obloquy. Some remonstrated, some jeered, many maligned him. In reviewing, as an old man, his life, he spoke feelingly

of the wounds which estrangement, cold looks, and broken intimacies had occasioned. On his loving nature these inflicted severe wounds. He said they had taught him the meaning of the Psalmist's words,—"Whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."

But, in truth, the society in which Wilberforce had moved had no mind to let him go. Whatever changes there might be in his secret convictions, there were none in his social attractions. He was still a brilliant converser. His vivacity, and the kindliness of his nature, were unaltered. Political circles opened their doors wide for him, and insisted on his entrance. Pitt would have him in his select coterie in Downing Street, and at Holwood. He would carry him off to Dundas's villa at Wimbledon. Lord Salisbury, Lord Chatham, the Bishop of Salisbury, must fix him to meet the Cabinet at their houses; Mr. Grenville, at one of his first dinners as Secretary of State; the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth, to meet the new Speaker, Mr. Addington. The Duke of Gloucester and the Duke of Kent engaged him to their princely parties; and not the less the hospitable Yorkshire gentry, and the clothiers of Bradford, and the manufacturers of Sheffield and Leeds. He was always blaming himself for his vivacity; he was too lively, too fond of conversation, too little watchful of opportunities of good. Yet this natural spring of cheerfulness was the best recommendation of his principles, and his sympathy and loving-kindness were more eloquent than sermons. So it fell out that all men drew to him. The soli-

tary thinker, Jeremy Bentham, brought to Kensington Gore his grievances and theories; the blind old traveller, Arthur Young, went there to be gladdened by the music of the silver voice. Mackintosh, who had ransacked society through all Paris and London, fixed on Wilberforce as the freshest mind. "I never saw any one who touched life at so many points." Henry Thornton said:—"Wilberforce is a man who, were he in Norway or Siberia, would find himself infested by company, since he would produce a population, for the sake of his society, in the regions of the earth where it is the least." He was always sighing for retirement; but, as he approached, retirement fled. He changed his house repeatedly, in hopes of escaping a crowd. He gave up his villa at Wimbledon. He went from Palace Yard to Broomfield, then far off from London, on the slopes of Battersea Rise. He took up his quarters at Kensington Gore, which, though now crowded with squares and crescents, was then a pleasant suburb, where cedars grew, and mulberry trees and walnut trees spread their shade. It was not far from Hyde Park Corner, but removed at that time from the chief resorts of politics and fashion; yet Wilberforce's house overflowed like an hotel. His terrace and dining-room were crowded at breakfast; and he had to take a lodging near, that he might escape the crowd. He went for retirement to Harrow-on-the Hill; but he writes,—"There was a gradual accumulation of visitors at breakfast, which would have reminded you of Kensington Gore." He went to the forest near Yoxall, in which Mr. Gisborne had

made for himself a retreat. But society found him out there,—"Even a forest, you see, has its callers." He hid himself on the Kentish coast, in what was then the unexplored village of Sandgate; no matter, he was never alone. He drew, as Dean Milner said, "a tail of friends after him." When he went to Brighton, peers and prelates would have him at their tables, and the Prince Regent at the Pavilion. At Bath, the door of his lodging streamed with visitors, like the door of an inn. At Buxton he is obliged to write,—"One cannot have a short uninterrupted walk; people join me."

It was the same in the early days after his change of religious views. He had then betaken himself for retirement to Rayrigg, near the Westmoreland lakes and the mountains of Cumberland. Immediately crowds of visitors appeared. There came the old Lord Camden; and the new Solicitor-General, Mr. Scott; and a host of lawyers from the circuit; and the learned Bishop Watson; and the clever Duchess of Gordon, and her daughter, who appeared at the window of his hermitage, and made good their entrance. And then came the Grantleys and Lord Lonsdale; while Lord Muncaster and Isaac Milner were guests living under his roof. All these he enchanted with his courtesy, and delighted with his varied conversation. Little did the visitors guess the thoughts which then occupied his mind. Little did they imagine, when they parted from their host for the night, after a delightful evening, when hours had flown like minutes through his brilliant talk, that he seated himself in his own

room over his Bible, to scrutinize his thoughts, and to write such words as these :—"I am hurt and ashamed of myself; yet, looking to God for strength, I resolve through Him to amend."* "I pray to a gracious God to have mercy on me, to turn the current of my affections from worldliness, and to impress my mind with an awful and abiding sense of that eternity which awaits me."† "If Christ's promise, that He would hear those who call upon Him, were less direct and general, I durst not plead for mercy, but should fall into despair."‡ "The result of examination shows me, that though my deliberate plans are formed in the fear of God, and with reference to His will; yet that, when I go into company, on which I resolve as pleasing to God, I am apt to forget Him; my seriousness flies away, the temptations of the moment to vanity and volatility get the better of me." Gentle to others, and tolerant of their infirmities, to himself he is stern; and, the most indulgent of men, when he sits in judgment on his own actions, passes, like a Roman patriot, an unwavering sentence. He discerns his selfishness, ("though I do not pass for selfish,") the seeds of vanity and ambition,—"I have of late perceived, on looking inwards, the workings of ambition, of love of this world, its honours, riches, estimation, and even of worldly desires for my family, of which, before, I do not recollect that I was conscious." Nay, examining himself in later life, he says :—"How does this review shame me! How should I be ashamed, if

* Life, vol. i. p. 121. † Ibid. p. 181. ‡ Ibid. p. 120.

others could see me just as I really am! I often think I am one grand imposture. My heart is heavy. Oh, there is nothing that can speak peace to the wounded spirit but the Gospel promise, and the promise is sure. God is love, and is able to save to the uttermost, and He will cast out none who come to Him. He it is, I trust, who has excited in me a disposition to come; and I will therefore press forward, humbly indeed, but truly, to His mercy, who has promised so many blessings to them that seek Him." And, in fact, the progress, which he failed to detect, was observed by others. His mother and sister saw a rapid change. To a party of friends at Llangollen, in 1790, he appeared a being of angelic goodness. "Had I," writes one of them, "a spark of enthusiasm about me, I should doubt whether he were not a Superior Being."

Yet at this very moment he was writing in his journal:—"My heart is now in a cold and senseless state; I have been short and cold and wandering in private devotions; all within is overgrown with weeds, and every truly Christian grace well nigh choked. Let me distrust myself; but let me throw myself at the feet of Christ, as an undone creature, distrusting, yea, despairing of myself, but firmly relying on Him. I fly to God for pardon, pleading the blood of Jesus; though I almost despair, yet Christ is mighty to save. Comparing myself as I am with what I ought to be, I am lost in unutterable shame and self-abasement." Yet he himself, as early as 1783, was conscious of a change. He was able to test it by a simple experience. He was

now at the place in Westmoreland where he had spent his leisure in 1784. "I scarce ever felt such wretchedness as during those days which I spent by myself, before my reader joined me at Rayrigg in 1784. My eyes were so bad that I could not read, the rain would not let me leave the house, and I had not a creature with whom to converse. I stood resting my forehead on the chimney-piece, in a state of weariness not to be described." Now he was in the same spot—his health still weak, his eyesight bad—but the mind changed. He no longer depended on society or excitement. To row out alone in early morning; to escape from company to solitude; to visit one of the wooded islands on the Lake of Windermere, and there to make for himself an oratory; to reflect and commune with God, to feel the Everlasting Presence, and bow before the Unseen Friend: these were his choicest pleasures.

The Sunday, which had once dragged its listless hours on leaden feet, now flew past him on wings of light. "To unbend, and contemplate the works and the goodness of God; to burst into feelings of united love and triumph, of holy confidence and unrestrained affection;" this was his rest. "A Sunday spent in solitude spreads and extends its fragrance." Writing to his sister in the confidence of his heart, after a bright April Sunday:—"I was out before six, and made the fields my oratory, the sun shining as bright and as warm as at Midsummer. I think my own devotions become more fervent when offered in this way, amidst the general chorus

with which all nature seems on such a morning to be swelling the song of praise and thanksgiving." And he now could look on "to that eternal rest, when the whole will be a never-ending enjoyment of those feelings of love and joy, admiration and gratitude, which are, even in the limited degree we here experience them, the truest sources of comfort." Thus wherever he goes he makes for himself an oratory for prayer—on the island in the lake, in the depths of the Needwood Forest, in the fields of Battersea Rise in the early morning, in the rope-walk behind his mother's house at Hull.

He speaks of the value of the morning hour. "In the calmness of the morning, before the mind is heated and wearied by the turmoil of the day, you have a season of unusual importance for communing with God and with yourself;" and he records his experience, that he did his business best, "when I have most properly observed my private devotions." To his sister, giving her rules for life, he reveals to us his own. "Watch and pray; read the Word of God, imploring that true wisdom which may enable you to comprehend and fix it in your heart, that it may gradually produce its effect, under the operation of the Holy Spirit, in renewing the mind." He had the same remedy for trials. On his wife's dangerous illness he writes:—"Give me, O Lord, a heart of flesh, that under Thy chastisements I may lift up to Thee a humble, reverential, and ever thankful eye." On her recovery:—"I will take a morning walk of gratitude and intercession." "Let us praise God, and extract good

from present evil, and turn temporary suffering into everlasting happiness." Hence it is that the record of his secret thoughts marks a progress from uncertainty to trust, and from partial to full illumination; often downcast, at times perplexed, but resolute, patient, and persevering.

To such a character, so sincere, social, and susceptible, the strong, rough sense of Isaac Milner was specially useful. It served as a wholesome tonic to a mercurial mind. The opinions of the two friends on many points differed. They differed at times on politics. Milner, as we should expect, was more determined in favour of Toryism, less disposed to modify his views, with strong prejudices and a fixed bias. When Wilberforce separated himself from Pitt and his party, the Dean was puzzled; but he gave wise advice, kept back his friend from words which could wound, and prevented the difference from deepening into variance. But when philanthropy and religion required it, the old Dean cast off his prepossessions, and breaking through a host of prejudices, he took his place alongside of Wilberforce in the defence of truth and the freedom of the slave. In religion, their progress differed, though along the same line. Milner found in his road more obstacles; much resistance in his own habits, though this difficulty, when met and conquered, disciplined to greater strenuousness his vigorous mind. With Milner there was strong faith, but many infirmities; Wilberforce's course was more serene, though at times even on his path clouds gathered, and mists that found relief in tears. We

may compare them to two different seasons, with their respective sunlight—the one a December sun, not warm but strong, its strength shown in the vapours which it scatters and the clouds which it drives before it from the face of the wintry heaven. The temper of the other, calm as a May morning, when, if clouds rise, they hang like folds of lawn, or disperse in showers, not darkening the sky, but leaving the sun to travel on to its evening glory, and to sink at last, as it passes through its varying colours, in a blaze of ruby, pearl, and gold.

The habits of the two men also differed—the one solitary, the other eminently social; the one with a few chosen companions, the other with a host of friends. The one a bachelor, living apart in the President's Lodge of Queen's College, or the deanery of Carlisle; the other, the statesman, fixed in the heart of London, busy in Parliament, in a crowd from morning to evening, and from the outset of the year to its close. Curious it was to observe the contrasted habits of the two friends. The one light and bright as a butterfly, never long on one subject, flitting from topic to topic. The other reflective, positive, tenacious, fixing on his point and sticking to it; a big, burly man, with a Johnsonian manner and loud peremptory voice. So, when they seat themselves for conference, and the subject interests them, and the humble-minded statesman would learn the views of the Dean, sure as fate interruptions come. A new book appears, or the latest number of the *Review*, and Wilberforce must just open it, and cut a few pages, and take a peep; or a

kitten creeps along the verandah, and he must catch it;—listening, of course, all the while, but with a divided and dubious ear. Then the gruff, voice of the old Don breaks out,—"Now, Wilberforce, listen; for no power will make me repeat what I am going to say." And the gentle philanthropist, all excuses and smiles, sits down again, and promises attention; when, alas for human purposes, one of his boys, or the child of a friend, bursts in, claps his hands in glee, and sues for a kiss; all the good intentions are forgotten; and while he pursues the enchantress, the vexed Dean disappears.

Yet they understand each other; and each, an honoured guest, exercises in his friend's house a familiar freedom. Nor is the Dean's presence unwelcome. The crowd of guests at Broomfield or Kensington Gore benefit by it. He interposes to reduce to some order the floating chaos of the household. For while the host's heart is large, and the stream of guests constant, the table has its limits, and at times the viands are scanty, and seats and plates few. Many look on with blank faces at empty platters; while the host, short-sighted, and busy with talk, does not see the want. At such a crisis, welcome is the Dean's appearance, when he stalks in with sturdy stride; and seeing at a glance the state of matters, shouts aloud to the servants,—"There is nothing on earth to eat; bring bread, bring butter, and bring plenty of both." And the gentle host, with his sunny temper unruffled, exclaims,—"Thank you kindly, dear Milner, for supplying my deficiencies."

True, the different habits and temperament of the friends occasioned some reserves. For it fell out that, while the statesman was always glad to see the Dean, the Dean was not always ready to receive the statesman. In fact, when he was busy in College, and preparing his lectures, it drove him wild to hear that Wilberforce intended to visit him. He warns him off; he begs him not to come; he has not a moment for company; he has no leisure even for *his* conversation. Yet when he is at leisure, no man is so welcome as his lively friend. His letters cheer him, his conversation refreshes him. No house, to which he himself goes so readily, as the hospitable house at Kensington Gore; no roof where he is so well received. When out of spirits, he resorts to it for comfort; when out of health, he goes for recovery. They cheer him when he is sad; they tend him when he is sick; when the infirmities of age creep over him, they nurse him fondly; and, when he lays him down to die, he breathes his last in their arms, in peaceful quiet at that familiar home.

And while he is himself a solitary man, and lives and thinks by himself, no one takes a deeper interest in the statesman's energetic career. He enters into his plans, he cheers or checks his ardour, and many a useful hint goes up from the study of the sturdy old President to the crowded breakfast-table of Broomfield and Palace Yard. Nor are the old Dean's letters cast aside. The politician reads them, takes them to heart, and profits by their counsels. So that early friendship, close and long-sustained, runs clear through life with an unslackening stream.

CHAPTER V.

EARLY FRIENDS.—REV. JOHN NEWTON.

THERE was one person with whom Mr. Wilberforce's altered views soon brought him into close communication. When he returned from the Continent to Wimbledon, in the autumn of 1785, he cast about for some one to whom he might open his thoughts and his difficulties on religion. Isaac Milner, even if he had been near him, was not the man suited for such an exigency. Milner was himself passing through much mental conflict, and had to do battle with some of the same doubts which beset Mr. Wilberforce's course. In London, at this time, there were few of the clergy who would have any fellow-feeling with Wilberforce's anxieties. No doubt, among the followers of Whitfield, as well as among those who belonged to Wesley's communion, he would have found ready advisers; but Mr. Wilberforce had no mind to seek, through these channels, the counsel he required. There were among the parochial clergy of London only three who held peculiar opinions, and were known to preach them. One of these, Mr. Romaine, had long been settled in London: another had settled there about four years before, placed in a City

church by the benevolent patron, John Thornton, with whose family Wilberforce was himself connected.

John Newton, however, had at this time reached his 61st year, and, neither from age nor habits, did he seem exactly the counsellor to whom a young man of twenty-seven would naturally turn. The church in which he preached was distant from Wimbledon; for St. Mary Woolnoth is in the heart of the City, and Newton's residence was also far removed, for it was in Coleman Street Buildings. The course of the two men through life had been extremely different. The one had been born to fortune, and to many social advantages; he had enjoyed both the benefits and the restraints of society, and had passed his youth in blameless respectability. The other, the son of a skipper, bred to a seafaring life, plunged by his own folly into straits, had travelled through every form of hardship, and run into scandalous depths of vice. Little, as it would seem, had the coarse, foul-mouthed negro-driver in common with the tastes or experience of the courteous and accomplished politician. Yet there was a point in the history of both men, in which, without their knowledge, their experience had met. Travelling on the same highway of thought, they had been arrested by the same truth, and had found in it a source of encouragement and of hope. The same words of Holy Writ had caught the eye and kindled the efforts of both. The young man, born in the lap of ease, and the mariner, who had toiled and slept before the mast, could unite in the same experience, and relate how the same words

had laid hold of both. Thus the sexagenarian, who was then stepping down into the shady valley, with a Christian experience of thirty-seven years, could stretch out his hand to strengthen the youth before whom life was opening brightly, who had only a twelve months' knowledge of religious thought. These facts, indeed, were unknown to Wilberforce when he made up his mind to open himself to John Newton. Newton had been the intimate friend of his aunt, and as a boy Wilberforce had doubtless seen him; but it was his reputation, more than these recollections, which induced him to visit him. He had gone more than once to his church, had been struck by his preaching, and removed to the Adelphi, in order with greater ease to attend his sermons. He felt that he needed some one of experience, as a judicious counsellor, to offer a helping hand to wavering steps. He resolved, therefore, after much hesitation, to call upon Newton.

To the preacher, indeed, such a visit was no ways unusual; for his house had become the resort of many persons drawn from different ranks, and of characters the most various. The rich and the poor went to him; the moral and the vicious; those who had loaded consciences; those who were troubled by scruples, or vexed by doubts. He was known beyond the circle of his hearers by some works which he had published. The story of his strange life had excited attention. It had been drawn up by himself, and was given to the world; it had startled and impressed many. It was curious from its incidents; still more from the depth of vice

through which, in days of licentiousness, he had waded. He had just published another work, which had attracted some attention. The "Cardiphonia" had enjoyed a considerable circulation, and it was sent in 1780 (just after Newton settled in London) to Mrs. Hannah More, by one of her literary friends, Mrs. Boscawen. Hannah More had not at that time heard of the author, but she was struck with the book—"its vital and experimental religion," "its rational and consistent piety." Though living at that time in the literary circle which included Johnson and Garrick, Burke and Horace Walpole, she was attracted by this work; and, after reading it, before the time of which we write, she had sought and made Newton's acquaintance. Other persons, less noted than Hannah More, applied to John Newton for advice; and his house in Coleman-street Buildings, at the time when it opened its doors to Wilberforce, was the resort of a great variety of persons.

Yet, apparently, there was little to attract men either to Newton's house or his society. His circumstances were straitened, and his education had been imperfect. He was not a man of learning, nor a great scholar, nor to be remarked for the brilliancy of his talk, or the refinement of his manners. He was not an eloquent speaker; one could not call him even a popular preacher. In the pulpit he was vastly inferior to Whitfield; in genius, and the tact which manages men, he was not to be named in the same day with John Wesley. He had none of the quaint humour of Rowland Hill; nor could he deal

in finely-embroidered writing like Hervey, or wield the strong logic of Scott, or rise to Fletcher's seraphic enthusiasm. He aimed at no brilliant effects in his pulpit compositions; no ray of eloquence, rarely even a gleam of fancy, was suffered to light up with a passing lustre his unadorned discourse. No man ever rushed out of his church enchanted, to pour forth to hearers equally enthusiastic his feelings of admiration. Nothing could be more uniform than his pulpit appearances. Yet, deficient as he was in rhetoric, inferior to many of his contemporaries in logical power, he exercised over his generation an influence superior to most men. He proved himself an attractive preacher to a large congregation, and numbers resorted to his house; for he was known to be a considerate and wise adviser to hesitating and troubled minds.

In the Olney Hymns we read the features of Newton's character. He felt that a collection of hymns was wanted, and he set himself to form it. He enlisted Cowper, a true poet, in the work; but Cowper's health was uncertain, and his work irregular; Newton, therefore, took up and finished the task, never allowing himself to consider his own fitness for it, nor how his prosaic verses would appear beside the poetry of his associate. The work had to be done, and, with such capacity as he possessed, he undertook to do it. The first book* consisted of 141 hymns, of which Newton contributed above 100. The whole collection contained 348,

* I quote from the fourth edition of these celebrated Hymns.

and he composed the larger portion. Some of his hymns are so prosaic that they limp like doggrel. A few are good enough to deserve the praise of poetry.* But in the best we seldom escape lines, even whole stanzas, which are intolerable; as if his taste could not discriminate between the bad and the good. And it is significant that, though these hymns find a place in every popular Collection, few of them appear as he wrote them,—stanzas are left out in some, in others lines are changed. On the other hand, so valuable are some of Newton's hymns, from their deep knowledge of the human heart, their experience of our wants, and their application to our need, that probably no hymns have ever been written which have given greater help to depressed and anxious minds. But whatever he was in verse, Newton was effective as a writer of prose. He was a large correspondent, and his correspondence shews us his qualities. His letters are not indeed charming, like those of Cowper, which are incomparable from their playfulness and their freedom from affectation. Newton's letters are written in answer to religious inquirers, and they necessarily assume a graver tone. 158 letters in the Cardiphonia, 41 with the signatures of Omicron and Vigil, are all on topics purely religious, but they are characterised by plain strong sense, experience, and practical wisdom. They have sufficient playfulness to relieve their gravity, and they are written in a tone of sin-

* 60th hymn of the first book; 72nd and 77th of the second book; 58th, 65th, and 82nd of the third book.

cerity and kindliness which secures both our confidence and esteem. They are types of the man,—full of homely sense, elevated by the sublime hopes of Christianity, and softened by its charities.

He was, indeed, a man very much to be observed from the character of his feelings as well as of his intellect. He had passed through a strange experience, and had undergone a training which might be regarded as unsuitable for the ministerial office. He had seen the worst aspect of life; and had travelled, by dark labyrinths, through depths of evil. Yet he retained the homely habits and the simplicity of a boy. With an understanding vigorous and practical, a courage frank and fearless, an iron will, and an inflexible purpose, he had a body made to match the sinewy texture of his mind. Free from weakness, little tried by disease, without a nerve through the whole tissue, he was able to endure trials, and bear provocations, which would have overcome the most equable temper. He could stand without flinching the fiercest onslaught, and could bear without shrinking the heaviest blows. If pain had been sent to try him, he would have endured it with the temper of a North American Indian; for he had a greater than bodily pain to bear, in the trials which tested his mind. He had had one deep attachment. He had loved Mary Catlett from youth upwards with a concentrated passion; and that one strong pure love had restrained him during years of excess, and sustained him under a weight of despondency: it lasted through life, and was only dissolved in the dust of his own grave. Yet, though he had idolized his

wife with a romantic idolatry, and loved her to old age with unabated attachment, he was so thoroughly master of himself and his emotions, that he knelt down, as soon as the breath left her body, and offered with unfaltering voice a prayer of thankfulness in the midst of his household, and without a tear committed her body to the dust; and he preached her funeral sermon on the Sunday after her death, with a voice that never shook, though there was not a dry eye in the affectionate audience, who hung in sorrow round the old man's pulpit. From the hour of her death he spoke and wrote of her to others calmly; and he entered minutely into the description of her bodily and mental sufferings; and, with unshrinking hand, laid bare her sorrows and his own. In writings meant for the public, he was wont to lay before the world the inner thoughts which men hide from their nearest friends; and he made an unshrinking confession of his early life of licentiousness, while most men, if in early youth they have ever approached in thought to such excesses, shrink from them in after days with an instinctive recoil, and never recur to them, even in their own closet, without a tingling blush of shame. And all this he did, not callously, not carelessly, still less, like Rousseau, with a morbid love of past vices, or a hollow profession of sentimental regret: he did it with a humbling retrospect of his past guilt, with the strongest self-abhorrence, and he wrote himself down in every letter (and set his hand to it in his last will, and in the epitaph prepared for his tomb) as the African

blasphemer and profligate, a marvellous example of the patience and forbearance of God.

Let no one suppose that in thus acting he was unfeeling or cold-hearted: his affections were warm. It was because he thought that this personal exposure would serve the cause of truth, and because he had so strong a sentiment of duty, that whatever seemed to him right, he would do, cost what it would. In carrying out this principle, he was not indeed restrained by delicate sensibilities; for his natural temperament was rough. He had what geologists call a pachydermatous frame; but with a natural temperament, which was coarse and obtuse, he became, through the softening influence of Christianity, a man of the tenderest charity. He never spent a day without endeavouring to do some one a service, to confer some pleasure, or to relieve some distress. Every morning of his life, when he stepped out of his humble rectory, he went his way to the dwellings of the poor; and, in all the mass of festering misery which he visited, he never laid his hand on the sorest wound of the most sensitive sufferer, that he did not leave behind him a healing balm. For the stout heart had been made soft through its inmost texture by the love of Him who had reclaimed it; and his character, renewed by Him, had risen through an inward resurrection, as flowers spring out of the rottenness of decay, and pour over the summer air their soothing fragrance. He looked round him on the heap of want and suffering which the world presents, and he resolved that he would do something to lessen the evil. It was little he,

or any man, could do; but that little should be done. "If, as I go home, a child has dropped a halfpenny, and if, by giving it another, I can wipe away its tears, I feel I have done something. I should be glad, indeed, to do greater things; but I will not neglect this."

His hours were broken; he was interrupted and worn by incessant applications—the lot, more or less, of every active clergyman in London. He never murmured at these interruptions; on the contrary, he took them as calls of duty. "When I hear a knock at my study door, I hear a message from God. It may be a lesson of instruction, perhaps a lesson of patience; but since it is His message, it must be interesting." The busy world, which rolled through the metropolis its eddies of toil and care, brought to him many waifs, which he sought and gathered out of the wreck. There was not a man, woman, or child, who was not glad to watch the old man, as he stepped firmly down the street, turning his footsteps to his door or garret; for he knew that some good would come to him out of the visit—if not help, some comfort, for comfort the brave heart knew how to speak to all. The steps to his own door were worn by the feet of hundreds, who crept to it, sad and weary, burdened with a load of care or guilt; but, after a short talk with the old man, and a prayer, they went away relieved. He was a monotonous preacher; he was a man of no fine words; his discourse was uniform, some would call it tame; yet the church of St. Mary Woolnoth was crammed to the door by an attentive audi-

ence. He had neither eloquence, nor fine action, nor the utterance of a pleasant voice; yet, while other reputations faded, his remained, and stood the test of twenty-eight years. The fact was, that those who came to his church came not to be amused, but to be taught, to be corrected, and strengthened —strengthened in their purpose to give up evil, and in their efforts to follow the way of good. They knew exactly what they would hear—nothing brilliant or exciting: the old, plain story of the Gospel. They learned from the preacher what a Saviour there was for any sinner who would seek Him; what a Friend he himself had found; and what a Comforter was the Spirit of God. They heard the same story week by week; but it seemed always fresh, for it came from a man who told it, not as a tale of fiction or a dream of fancy, but as that which he had realized—the history of his own experience. He knew it, and he lived by it. The Saviour of whom he spoke, was to him a living person, whom he had sought and found, on whom he leant day by day, and communed with as a friend. If any of his hearers thought these things unreal, he could comfort them; once unreal to him, they had now become familiar. If they were perplexed by doubts; he had passed through them all. If they were beset by passions; his passions had been wilder and more indulged. If they were pressed by temptations, he had passed through a fiercer conflict. They complained to him of their long warfare—a fight with their own hearts so tedious, that it made their spirits faint — so

doubtful, that it drove them well-nigh to despair. He had tried it all; he had encountered the same temptations; had met, face to face, Apollyon and his legion; had listened to their suggestions; had followed their perilous guidance; had almost seen, in the darkness, their awful forms. Yet, by the help of One greater than they, he had been rescued. He had escaped with his life, and he was there to tell them the way of safety. Now he could lie down in green pastures, and linger under the refreshing shade by still-flowing waters. They might achieve the same. They had in their hands the same weapons —the Book of Holy Writ, the Divine Spirit to teach them, the earth on which to kneel, the dew from heaven to water them, and the same fount of living water: all to be had for the asking. Why did not they ask? They might find the Book of Scripture uninteresting. So had he; yet it had now become his stay. Let them read and pray, and they would not fail.

Such was the staple of his teaching, set off by the practice of his life. To such a preacher came crowds; and, when they had once come, they came again. The infidel and the doubter, the prodigal and the unclean, came to hear him—came back again and again. They wrote to him, when they dared not visit him. They wrote to him without their names, as they thought their names would scandalize him. Some came under cloak of night, to hide their shame. They blushed as they told

their story—how they had lived, and in what guilt. They asked if for such wretches there could be hope, and for such sinners any chance of pardon. These were they whom the old man welcomed, kindly, tenderly; for these he had cheerful words; their inquiries he could answer; for, once an infidel and a libertine, he had found peace and purity—why should not they? So not one of the many who crept to that humble door went away without a word in season—a word of promise, and words of prayer.

But not only by the outcast was the preacher sought; nor was he useful only to the despairing and the profligate. Mothers, trembling for their sons, thrown headlong into the vortex of London, wrote to the old pastor, and besought his counsels for them; and he gave them readily, for to youth his advice was attractive: they saw that he knew their temptations, and could feel for them. Others came to his church from curiosity; and, when they heard him, were encouraged to open their hearts to him. For there was a plain sense in what he said, and a heartiness in his way of saying it, that drew men to him. Thus, among others, came a young Scotchman, who had been intended by his parents for the ministry of the Church of Scotland, but who, fond of adventure, had broken loose from the straight course designed for him, had left his country, and travelled as a vagabond, working his way, like Goldsmith, by his flute; and at length, half starved and ashamed, had crept into London. There he

supported himself as a clerk, without the knowledge of his friends, and, lost to sight, was buried in the Babel of the metropolis. He went with others to hear Newton preach; he wrote to him without his name, to tell him of his mother's wish, of his past course, its folly, and its guilt. Answered by a notice from the pulpit, he took heart, and went to the old man, and there he found such kindness and wise counsels, that the visit fixed his purpose, and became the turning-point of his life. Thus he was led to a new resolution, in which he persevered. Newton's influence procured him the patronage of Mr. Thornton, and resources which enabled him to go to Cambridge; and the future usefulness and the long Eastern services of Dr. Claudius Buchanan were due to his seasonable acquaintance with John Newton. Others in different positions sought his help. He went to comfort Cecil in his depressing illness. The sensitive Cowper settled at Olney, that he might enjoy Newton's society, and under its soothing influence find, as he did, relief for several years (from 1767 to 1773) from his sore mental disease. Scott resorted to him as an enquirer; and the eager, but earnest Socinian was led, by Newton's wise forbearance, to those reflections which brought him at length to truth and peace. Nor was Newton's correspondence less sought than his conversation. Persons from all parts of England wrote to him; from Scotland* also, and from Ireland; and to all he wrote answers in the

* I have found letters of Newton's addressed to an old and devout Christian lady residing near Glasgow.

same clear hand, with the same straightforward views.

To Newton then, at length, drawn by the same impulse, Wilberforce came. Newton had begun his ministry at St. Mary Woolnoth, in 1779; and it was in 1785 that the young statesman visited him. The old man received him gladly: he entered into his difficulties; he encouraged him, and gave him sound advice. It was a critical moment to the politician. His religious change was fresh; his feelings were warm; his fears were strong. The advice of an experienced Christian was certain to have great weight with him. Well for him that he fell into such hands. Had he gone for advice to Rowland Hill, he would have been urged to follow his eccentric course; to give up lay occupations, to abandon his station in life, and go out, as he and his brother had done, as itinerant preachers, to rebuke and reclaim society. Had he consulted John Wesley, Wesley would have laid hold of him, turned him into a Methodist teacher, or sent him as a superintendent to organize and lead the classes. Had he gone to old John Berridge, or the devout Fletcher, they would have conjured him to fly from Parliament and London, and seek, in the silent shades and retirement of the country, the life of contemplation in which they found their strength. But John Newton was a man of a different stamp, and took a different view of life. He knew—no man better—that religion did not need for its growth Arcadian retreats or rural shade. He had found that it could thrive in the heart of the City,

and in the busy traffic of men. He knew that it might become extinct in the solitude of Olney, and corrode into rust in the depths of a monastery. He knew this by his own experience. He had lived in an African desert, among the shady groves of bananas and palms, and had nursed in these a heart burning with lust, and filled with hatred to God and man. He had lived in a crowded slave-ship, the commander of a desperate crew, and there he had spent hours in his cabin in the study of his Bible and in prayer. His lot was now cast in the heart of the City, where smoke and din and crowds encompassed him; where he could hardly snatch a moment from engrossing claims; where the knocks at his door were loud and quick from morning to evening, and with every knock came an interruption; a call of duty, or a summons to labour; a visitor who needed a conference, or a letter that must have an answer. Yet he had found that in this life, when his only walk was along the dusty thoroughfare, and his only shade was that of the narrow alley, his path was crossed by gleams of sunshine, and the light of a Father's countenance shone on his tranquil spirit. He could write from a brief visit to Berkshire: "I am an enthusiast for the country: here we have hills and dales, woods, lawns, and rivers; all is delightful. My post at St. Mary's, in the midst of noise and smoke, is very different; but still it is my post, and I would not change it for any spot in the habitable globe."

Therefore, when Wilberforce came to him, he gave him his counsel. He bid him stay at his post,

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and neither give up work, nor throw away wealth; wait and watch occasions, sure that He, who put him at his post, would find him work to do. He advised him to live in the society he was in, and not to quit it for a more exclusive circle; to keep up his intimacy with Mr. Pitt; and to find, in the sphere in which he was moving, a field for active duty. The Master, whom he sought to serve, would use his service. Well was the advice taken; and the old man lived to see his prophecy fulfilled. He watched with interest the statesman's progress. He rejoiced when he saw him lift his voice against public vice, and become the defender of religion and morals. He rejoiced still more when he heard him raise his voice in Parliament to assert our duty as a Christian nation in India; and when he took up his great mission and assailed slavery, Newton came forward to bear his testimony against a traffic in which he had once taken part, and the horrors of which he knew well. They met but seldom; their occupations differed; but they exchanged letters and good wishes. The old man sent Wilberforce his congratulations, when marriage, of which *he* had long tasted the comfort, came to crown the domestic happiness of his friend. He lived long enough to see Wilberforce's efforts in the slave-trade reach their consummation; and, even before this time, the old man, close upon eighty, wrote to the statesman, in one of his last letters, some words of encouragement. And when Newton's life had advanced till his strength had failed, the old pastor left, by his cheerfulness

and constancy of hope, a useful lesson, which the younger man turned to account in days when his own strength declined. So wise a friend did Wilberforce find in John Newton.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EARLY AND LATE FRIEND:—HANNAH MORE.

THERE was a third person with whom Wilberforce made acquaintance soon after the change in his religious opinions. With her a fast friendship grew up, which lasted through his life. This friendship formed a link between the generation among whom Wilberforce began his political life, and the men of letters who preceded him. It connected him with Dr. Johnson, and Soame Jenyns, and Horace Walpole, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Goldsmith; and with a galaxy of female talent, Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Thrale, and the venerable Mrs. Delaney. Hannah More was the link which thus bound together two circles widely apart. She had passed the age of forty, and had gained a high literary reputation, when she first became acquainted with Wilberforce.

She was the youngest but one of five daughters, children of a respectable schoolmaster, who had married the daughter of a farmer, and had taught an endowed school in the parish of Stapleton in Gloucestershire. Both parents seem to have possessed plain strong understandings. Some time after their death,

the sisters removed to Bristol, where, for their maintenance, the elder kept a boarding-school; and in this school Hannah, as well as her younger sisters, were brought up. Hannah had early shown talent, and a turn for literary pursuits. She had contributed poems to provincial magazines; and, after obtaining repute there, she became a contributor to the magazines of the metropolis. Her poetry attracted the observation of the *literati* of Bristol and its neighbourhood, and was at last noticed by literary men in London. The poet Langhorne admired her verses; Dean Tucker became her correspondent; Sir James Stonehouse, a physician of repute, and a friend of Lady Huntingdon, praised her compositions; her letters were read by Garrick; and her verses were remembered by Johnson. In the summer of 1774, when she had reached the age of twenty-nine, she felt an irresistible desire to visit London, and to enter the charmed circle which used to meet in the houses of Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Ord, and the Duchess of Portland, and the Bishops of St. Asaph and Chester; where Burke and Windham harangued, and Garrick sparkled with wit, and Sir Joshua Reynolds held up his trumpet, and Dr. Johnson poured forth his sonorous sentences. So she went, and was welcomed by Garrick, who had been flattered by her praise. She was introduced to Sir Joshua and his delightful sister; and at his house in Leicester Square she had her first interview (not without terror) with the great Doctor, who turned from the parrot he was stroking to take the hand of the young authoress, and to

calm her fears, and convey his tribute by addressing her in verses of her own. When she was admitted to Garrick's inner circle at the Adelphi, where wit and sour-kraut were served; when she passed days at his villa at Hampton, and was addressed by him as "All the Nine," her place was fixed. Still more when Dr. Johnson had caused her to visit his blind protégée in Bolt Court, a mark of signal favour; when he condescended to join her evening parties, and drank in quick succession cups of tea; placed her beside him on the sofa; joked with her and scolded her; calling her child, dearest, and little fool; took an interest in her reading; shook his head with mock austerity because she would read Puritan and Jansenist authors; and praised her (while his eyes filled with tears) for her growing religious earnestness. Mrs. Carter noticed her; Mrs. Montagu admitted her to her stately coterie in Portman Square; Mrs. Vesey, to the scramble in her rooms; Mrs. Garrick would have her as her companion; Bishop Porteus, the Dean of Gloucester, Mr. Pepys, the learned Dr. Kennicott, and Bishop Barrington became her friends. Mrs. Chapone praised her, and the worthy Jonas Hanway; Chancellor Bathurst entertained her at Apsley House with anecdotes of Pope, the friend of his father, and of Lord Bolingbroke, and showed her letters of Pope and Voltaire. Mrs. Delaney carried her back to the days of George I.; Horace Walpole told her his boyish recollections of his father, the struggles of Sir Robert Walpole, and his fall. General Oglethorpe, at the age of ninety, related his adventures;

Lord Rodney spoke to her of his recent battle; Lord Macartney recounted his voyages to the East, and Lord North amused her with the wit which had long been the delight of the House of Commons. Lord Monboddo, fresh from Scotland, with queer theories and queerer looks, made her an offer of his hand. Sir William Jones unfolded to her his eastern learning; Gibbon showed her the last volumes of his History, just passing through the press; Dr. Percy, Bishop Louth, and the Wartons opened for her their stores of erudition; Bishop Barrington and Bishop Shipley had her at their crowded parties, in one of which she met the young Prince of Wales. She went to Covent Garden to see produced the early plays of Sheridan. Her chair was mobbed in Westminster in the great election of 1784, in which the beautiful Mrs. Crewe and the fair Duchess of Devonshire wore buff and blue in honour of Fox, and canvassed for him the bakers and butchers of London. Thus, before she had reached the age of thirty, the Bristol girl had met almost every notable person of that generation, and was received as a guest in the first literary circles of London.

In the year 1755, when she first published a work avowedly her own, Johnson grasped her hand and quoted from her verses, and Garrick read them with such fervour that he drew tears from his hearers. When she wrote a tragedy for the stage, the prologue and epilogue were composed by Garrick; and, as he had ceased to act, Mrs. Siddons supplied his place. Home, the author of Douglas, and Mackenzie, author of the Man of Feeling, vied with

Hoole and Mason in sounding her praises. Peers and peeresses, from Grosvenor Square and Northumberland House, sent her flattering words. Dr. Johnson, in his last visit to Oxford, conducted her to his old rooms at Pembroke, and with wan looks took her to the great walk in Christ Church, which he had frequented as a lad. During his two last years in London, when his health was failing, he roused himself to converse with her, and forgot the dropsy, and his fear of death, in the enjoyment of her conversation.

No doubt, the daughter of a provincial schoolmaster, the sister of a Bristol schoolmistress, thus raised into the first society, and flattered by the most distinguished persons, ran a great risk of having her head turned. She had been carefully brought up, and respect for religion had been early inculcated; but in after days she confessed that the wit of infidel authors, and their smart raillery, had a strong attraction for her. Nor was London the place, nor was that the generation, to deepen good impressions. Her intimate acquaintance with London extended from 1773 to 1787, and assuredly the condition of morals, and the habits of society, were not then favourable to piety. In spite of Johnson's writings, the fashionable world ran its old course with little change. If it was bad in the days of Addison, so bad under Queen Anne and George I. as to make divines despond and good men augur the worst, it had not changed much for the better towards the end of Johnson's life. Under the decorous reign of George III. there was plenty

of wit and talent. Great writers, statesmen, and lawyers abounded. There were Hume and Gibbon and Burke. There were Lord Camden and Wedderburn and Thurlow. There were wits like Townsend and Beauclerc, and Hare and Williams, and Selwyn and Sheridan. There were Horace Walpole and Cumberland; but the habits of high life were bad habits, and the opinions of clever men were bad opinions. Men and women played high; fortunes were squandered at faro and quinze. Sunday and Saturday were alike for the gamblers. Fox contracted huge debts, and taught the Prince of Wales to do the same. When Count Adhemar was struck down by apoplexy, a large party assembled, in spite of his illness, at his house in Grosvenor Square, on the Sunday evening; and the faro bank in the drawing-room went on briskly, separated by a thin partition from the bed on which he lay dying. The Clubs were the resorts of politicians. At these, it was the fashion for every one, from the prince to the parvenu, to play high. In Brookes's and White's, Almack's and the Goose-tree Clubs, estates were staked and lost; and there were other orgies even more scandalous, which were talked of with a smile. Horace Walpole tells us, with a broad grin, of the ways and doings of Charles Fox. Lord Sandwich, Lord Temple, Selwyn, and Lord March, were all fashionable leaders; and the repute of statesmen was not affected by proceedings which now would make society turn its back on them. Lord Temple's vices did not prevent the first Pitt from demanding the Garter for him. Lord Bute chose Sir Francis Dashwood as his Chancellor of Exchequer.

George III. made Lord Sandwich his First Lord of the Admiralty. Yet both had been actors in the scandals of Medmenham Abbey. And Lord Sandwich published verses, in which it was hard to say whether vice or blasphemy exceeded. The Duke of Grafton was the friend of Lord Chatham, and the Premier of George III.; yet he paraded his mistress at Newmarket, and led her to the theatre in presence of his queen. Lord Weymouth, Lord Barrington, and Lord Rochford were all ministers of state, and all notorious for vice. Lord Thurlow, keeper of the royal conscience and the king's favourite chancellor, and Warren Hastings, his favourite governor of India, were alike notorious. Lord Thurlow put a worthless woman at the head of his household; Warren Hastings lived for years in adultery, and then publicly celebrated his marriage with the woman along with whom he had braved decency.

In such a state of society, religious observance was small. The sermons which Blackstone heard, when he came as a young man to London, were, he has told us, below the standard of the morality of Plato or Cicero.* He himself gave it as his opinion, that, for all that they contained of religion, it would have been hard to say whether the preacher believed in the Koran, the Talmud, or the Bible. By the most decorous persons Sunday was treated as a day of pleasure. Ladies of the most correct life, like Mrs. Montagu, had their regular Sunday parties and Sunday concerts, to which Hannah More was invited. The Court had their Sunday drawing-

* Recollections from Sir Robert Inglis's Conversation.

room; the Speaker and the Cabinet on that day gave their public dinners. A change, indeed, had reached society, and flushed over it some freshness. This began among the middle and lower classes, and touched at last the upper ten thousand. Peers and peeresses, wits and authors, had been tempted by curiosity to listen to the sermons of Whitfield; and in the drawing-rooms of Lady Huntingdon and Lady Fanny Shirley, the preacher had addressed fashionable congregations, which till then had never heard of Jesus Christ. There were a few persons of rank, the Countess De Litz and Lady Chesterfield, the Duchess of Somerset, the Ladies Hastings, Lady Gertrude Hotham, Lady Glenorchy, and Lord Dartmouth, who were influenced by the new feeling. The contagion reached the lawyers, of which Mr. Pepys was a specimen. It touched the merchants, as was shown in the life of John Thornton the benevolent. Dr. Kennicott stood firm for religion at Oxford; and Bishop Porteus on the bench of bishops. Still there was a profound horror of Methodism; and, if any one was known to read his Bible, or to converse with a religious clergyman, he was marked and laughed at. Methodism, in fact, was put down as a low, vulgar opinion, only to be tolerated in the middle and lower classes. Thirty thousand persons attended the Wesleyan chapels, when Newton came to London in 1774: probably not a dozen of these were of the higher class. If a clergyman became Methodistical, preferment and promotion were closed. For what had the upper class to do with these things? They

were useful only to tame the rabble. The Decalogue, Horace Walpole said, was only meant for these low fellows: the upper classes had a better rule of life, and had no need of chains and curbs.

So, at the time when Hannah More first saw London, there were but two churches where the preaching now called Evangelical prevailed. Thornton added a third, by placing Newton in St. Mary Woolnoth. But though the progress of religion was slow, the new opinions began to spread; and the epidemic reached, at the same time, different parts of the country. It appeared in Yorkshire, and on the hills of Shropshire and Derbyshire; it spread over the plains of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and Worcestershire; it showed itself in the Midland Counties, in Bucks, Beds, and Herts, and in the opposite extremities of Kent and Cornwall; it took strong hold of Bath and Bristol. Mr. Venn at Huddersfield, Joseph Milner at Hull, Mr. Walker at Truro, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Hervey, and Mr. Grimshaw, wrote and preached the same opinions. Old Berridge spread them with missionary zeal. The efforts of Wesley and his followers reacted on the Church. Sir Richard Hill and Rowland Hill, though erratic stars, lighted up with flashing streaks the sombre sky of the Church firmament.

The young authoress fell under these influences. She owed much to the training of her eldest sister. In her own mind, mixed with the desire of distinction and the elation of success, was the love of good. Her regard for Dr. Johnson rose out of her

respect for truth. The society into which she was admitted in Garrick's house was not favourable to these reflections; but events befell her which taught her sharp lessons. She saw Mr. Thrale carried off in a moment from the enjoyment of wealth and position. She was a witness of the mournful procession which carried Garrick's wit and frolic to moulder in the vaults of Westminster Abbey. Her own health was uncertain. She was laid aside, in the midst of London pleasures and pursuits, by frequent attacks of illness. Thus she had leisure for thought. She says herself it was good that "contemplation might plume her wings, ruffled by the crowd and pressure of the bustling world." At such times she studied the writings of Fénélon and Pascal, and the Jansenists. She devoured South, Warburton, Atterbury, Barrow, and Jeremy Taylor; and she added to these the works of Baxter and Howe, Hall, Hopkins, and Doddridge. In one of her illnesses, she carefully studied the epistles of St. Paul, with the Commentary of Matthew Henry. By degrees there came a change in her tastes. She refused invitations to Sunday parties (1788). She defended religion against the jests of Horace Walpole. She drew closer to the few who advocated a purer walk—to Mr. Pepys and Dr. Kennicott, Bishop Burgess and Bishop Barrington, Soame Jenyns, Dr. Horne, and the venerable Mrs. Delaney, whose touching verses, full of piety, written at the age of eighty-four, she recites with admiration. She became the frequent guest of Bishop Porteus, and visited him at Fulham and in his cottage near

Sundridge in the quiet valley of the Darent. She took a warm interest in the writings which recommended religion. She tells one correspondent of her delight in the simple piety of Cowper's poems (1786). She thanks Mrs. Boscawen (1780) for introducing her to the writings of Newton, and is delighted with the "vital religion" of the Cardiphonia, though it be of the "calumniated school." In 1787 she takes heart, and goes to hear Newton preach, and returns with an armful of his sermons. Thus an acquaintance begins, which ripens into friendship, and leads to a close correspondence of many years. In place of smart letters of badinage addressed to Horace Walpole, and exchange of compliments with Mrs. Montagu, she writes earnest letters, in which she seeks direction, asks help, and entreats prayer. Now she begins to turn her talents to use, to improve the tastes and advance the religion of her cotemporaries. She resolves to tear herself from the excitement of London, and seek a retreat in the country. With this view she appropriates some of the profits of her writings to the purchase of a cottage in Somersetshire, and there she fixes herself with her sisters, who had built for themselves a house in Bath for their winter residence, but passed their summers with her in the pretty cottage of Cowslip Green, which became for a time their favourite home.

In the same year (1785) that Hannah More was collecting the notices of Dr. Johnson's last hours, and that, nerved by the scenes she had witnessed, she was preparing for herself a retreat in Somerset-

shire, Wilberforce passed through that change of thought which we have described. Soon after, they met at Bath. They had been for some time converging to each other. Many ties drew them together. Newton was now the friend of both. Both, though in separate lines, had resolved to do something to improve the habits of the upper class. To this end during the same year (1787), Wilberforce was engaged in visiting the heads of the Church and several leading laymen, and establishing the Association for the Suppression of Vice. Hannah More turned her pen to promote the same object, and produced her "Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society." Another bond drew them together. Hannah More had been for some time acquainted with Sir Charles and Lady Middleton; and she often visited them in Kent, at Teston. To the same house came Wilberforce, in 1787, to confer with the zealous hostess, who, having learned the horrors of slavery from the clergyman of her parish, Mr. Ramsay, after she had in vain urged her husband to bring the subject before Parliament, was delighted to find in the young member for Yorkshire a willing auditor. In the same cause she had enlisted the literary talents of Hannah More. As soon as Hannah More reached the Adelphi, in the spring of 1787, Lady Middleton called on her, put into her hands Mr. Ramsay's pamphlets, and poured into her ear tales of horror. She prevailed on her to write a poem on Slavery, which appeared at the end of the year.

Thus there was a common subject, as well as

common friends, to unite the two. In the spring of 1787 they met in London. When Wilberforce had publicly announced his intention of bringing the abolition of the slave trade before Parliament, Hannah More wrote thus to a correspondent,—"This most important cause has very much occupied my thoughts this summer. The young gentleman, who has embarked in it with the zeal of an apostle, has been much with me, and engaged all my little interest and all my affections in it." They met again the same autumn at Bath. Mrs. Hannah More spent much of her time with Mr. Wilberforce's family; and she says of him, "That young gentleman's character is one of the most extraordinary I ever knew for talents, virtue, and piety. It is difficult not to grow wiser and better every time one converses with him." From this time their intimacy was fixed. A frequent correspondence cemented it. Their friendship lasted till the close of both their lives; for Mr. Wilberforce visited his venerable friend at Clifton in 1832, and his death took place in July 1833, when he had nearly completed his 74th year; and this event only preceded by two months Hannah More's death in September, in her 89th year.

Mr. Harford* has given us a pleasant picture of the five sisters during their residence in the cottage of Barley-wood, to which, after they gave up Cowslip Green, they removed, and there spent together many years of usefulness. From this home four of

* See Recollections of W. Wilberforce, Esq., by John S. Harford, Esq., 1864, p. 265, &c.

them were carried to their graves. The eldest sister, who at the time of Mr. Harford's visit (1809) was rather deaf, was of reserved manners and stately appearance. The high cap and ruff of powdered hair bespoke the fashions of a former age. The second sister, Sally, was the wit of the family, with much natural talent, a quaint humour, and a warm heart. She superintended the garden. The third sister, full of good nature and hospitality, managed the household. Hannah, the next, was the central sun of the firmament; to her the eyes of all the sisters were turned with admiration. They recited her sayings, repeated her verses, delighted in her success, and were charmed with her books. She, with dutiful affection, turned with deference to her elder sister, and was never satisfied unless she could make her hear and enjoy the conversation. The youngest of the sisterhood was Martha, commonly called Patty; simple, humble, genial; without a thought for herself; all hands, eyes, and ears for her beloved sister Hannah; diligent in good works, clever, and earnest; but careless of herself, so that she could draw attention to the saying and doings of her cherished sister. Thus they lived in sisterly affection.

But, living such a life, they could not rest till they had made their residence a blessing to others. The cottage, in which they at first settled, was not far from the famous Cliffs of Cheddar. But the romantic beauty of the hills was shaded by the recklessness of the people. It chanced that, in the autumn of 1789, Mr. Wilberforce, with his sister, visited his friends

at the cottage; and went to see the celebrated Cliffs. He returned appalled by the distress and ignorance of the inhabitants. He could not eat nor sleep after his visit, till a scheme for their improvement was prepared. This work was shared between him and the two sisters, Hannah and Patty. They were to undertake the work, and he and Henry Thornton were to supply the means. In this work both sisters took their share. The organising, arranging, and commencement fell on Hannah. Patty stepped in when illness laid her sister aside; and she brought to the enterprise a fund, which was a rich capital—love, patience, and prayer. They found difficulties in their way which in these days are hardly known. The clergy disliked the effort. The farmers were violent against it. The people—miners in coal-pits, workers in glass-works, and rustics—made up a race who combined the vices of the three classes: the colliers drunkenness, the glass-workers turbulence, and the peasants boorish apathy. Yet, in the face of these hindrances, they fought their way. Week-day and Sunday schools sprung up in nine villages. Pious schoolmistresses were settled in the midst of a savage population. The feelings of the clergy were so carefully consulted, that the aversion of many ceased, and some became warm friends. Rectors, who had drawn tithes for half a century without ever catechising a child or preaching a sermon, were shamed into activity. A wild people, living in depravity near the top of Mendip, where no writ could be served nor constable venture, received these gentle ladies

in their ministry of love. At first they wondered at them, then they learned to respect, at last they loved them. Farmers who had vowed to pull down the schools, and to break the heads of the builders, closed their mouths, which had vented abuse, and opened their purses. Rich rude squires, who had lived in boorish sensuality, who had argued that the poor were decreed to be ignorant, and that to teach them was to go against the will of Providence, stood gaping with open mouths when they heard the rustics read, sing, and pray. Strange assistance came, and unlooked-for friends. Devoted clergymen accepted scanty cures, in order to spend their lives in reclaiming the ignorant. Poor men, unnoticed till then, who had been labouring in humble situations, were found out, encouraged, and directed. Ten parishes supplied to the schools a thousand children. The children soon showed the fruits of discipline; and lessons of Scripture, committed to memory, hymns and psalms read and sung, touched the children's affections and the hearts of the parents. Collier lads and dissolute young women were reclaimed. The workers in glass-houses, who had lived in such a fashion as to entitle their place to the name of Botany Bay and Little Hell, grew ashamed of their vices, and forsook them. Farmers, cold-hearted, close-fisted, and hard as stones, became gentle and sympathising. Industrial Societies and Benefit Clubs dispersed new ideas, and awoke new desires. The lives of the people were altered, and with better lives came happy deaths. But all this was not done without

an incredible amount of labour; and done by infirm ladies, laid aside by frequent illness. Visits, Sunday after Sunday, to organise Sunday schools, and to direct them; visits during the week, through roads impassable for a carriage; clergymen and laymen, guests of Hannah More, conducted by her to these outlying places, to speak to them; earnest addresses, written by Hannah, printed and circulated; tracts distributed, and Bibles and Prayer-books: such were among the appliances of this hard campaign. To this work Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Henry Thornton contributed funds for years. Here Wilberforce went every year to trace the progress. Newton preached there, and John Venn. The results are given by Hannah More in the year 1816. She mentions that she and her sister had kept up for thirty years schools in these ten parishes; that these schools had been taught by faithful mistresses; that out of these had grown Female Friendly Societies which gave help to children and to mothers in distress, clothing clubs, relief in times of famine, in epidemics an abundant charity. Over this large district, in spite of many hindrances, these persevering labours won their way—a lesson for us and a model.

One of the most intimate friends of the Miss Mores, and their counsellor and mainstay, was Henry Thornton. At his house at Battersea Rise Hannah and Patty were frequent visitors—acceptable alike to the heads of the household and to its younger members. "May is coming, and then Hannah More will be with us," was the joyful note of the children. No

greater treat to a sick child than to leave her on Sunday under the charge of Patty More. Such stories from the Bible—such vivid pictures of the doings of the patriarchs, and the wanderings of the tribes of Israel, that the delighted listener fancied that her instructress must have lived in those times, and known the persons. What a jubilee it was to the young group, when the busy banker could snatch a holiday in autumn, and transport his family to the paradise of Barley Wood.

O! qui complexus et gaudia quanta fuerunt!

To be welcomed under the trellised porch, with its fragrant canopy; to meet the five kind sisters —"the ladies," as they were called in the neighbourhood—and to be received with such an exuberance of joy, was a treat: so bright was Hannah —so blithe the merry Sally—so beaming with kindness Patty, the universal favourite—to see them in their home, with each her sphere of duty—one presiding over the garden, the other over the commissariat, two with charge over the poor at a distance, another caring for their poor neighbours, attending to their young guests, providing for their pleasures, and, as they listened to their merry voices, helping their mirth, as gladsome as children, and with as keen a relish of enjoyment. "Surely," says one of the visitors, "there never was such a home—so full of intellect and piety and active benevolence—they lived in such uninterrupted harmony with each other—enjoyed with such intense vivacity all the pleasures of their beautiful home; so wholly laid aside the forms of society that were

irksome, that all, young and old, felt themselves in a brighter and happier world; alloyed, indeed, by fearful attacks of illness, but even when these occurred, the long-suffering and cheerfulness of patient and nurses never failed."

While this was their daily life, Sunday only brought fresh delights. For the two sisters, Hannah and Patty, in their robuster days took the work at a distance, and went on horseback, on a pillion, behind the old coachman, to one of the villages near. For this a carriage (if the rustic conveyance deserved such a name) was substituted when years and infirmities came on. "In these parishes," says our informant, "there was only a single service; so, after they had taken the children to church, the ladies dined at some farmer's house, who was proud to entertain them," and then proceeded to the school. Not, indeed, a school of the modern type, with drilled ranks and order—the later plans and tactics of schools were unknown; to learn to read and understand their Bible was the summit of rustic ambition. But when the Sunday lessons were finished, Hannah—or, in her absence, Patty—took up the parable. And no orator ever had a more gratified audience. How they hung on her tales!—stories of old times, and the good men who lived at the time, mixed with anecdotes of modern days, of those whom they had known—neighbours who lay in the churchyard near, and young pupils early gathered home; and how eloquent the address, because so earnest; and how luminous the lessons; pointing the commandments

of the Divine law to the details of rustic life—as that the Fifth Commandment meant that the child should be docile, run its mother's errands readily, and fulfil her commands, not lazily or saucily, but with a willing mind. True eloquence; for it fixed the hearers' eyes, and touched their hearts.

While thus, over the neighbourhood where they had settled, the labours of these earnest teachers produced an impression, the literary talents of Hannah acted on society at large. From the year when her moral writings began, in 1787, they continued in the same line for nearly fifty years. "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great" came out when Wilberforce was endeavouring to call attention to the state of public morals, and to raise the low standard. Hannah More contributed to this. Her playful wit, her pleasant style, had the same object in view as the essays of Addison, but with a tone more distinctly religious. In 1790 she brought out the "Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World." These works had a marked effect on the social sentiments of her times. One of her correspondents, writing in 1815, and contrasting the state of religion twenty years before, when the poor lived in vicious ignorance and the rich in presumptuous apostasy, attributes the salutary change to two causes—Mr. Raikes's Sunday-schools, and the writings of Hannah More. Her writings reached the upper classes in a way then unusual. They were recommended both by her literary fame, and by the variety and sprightliness of her style. The evidence of this is found in the popularity of her works, and

their circulation among the higher classes. The work on the "Manners of the Great" ran rapidly through many editions, and passed from the Queen and the Court to the hands of fashionable ladies, literary persons, and divines. The "Hints for the Education of a Princess" were read by the Princess Charlotte, by the bishop who was her tutor, and by the Duchess of Gloucester. Her political Tracts, which she wrote against democratic opinions in the times of the French Revolution, (Will Chip, Village Politics, &c.,) were distributed largely by prelates, by politicians, by the Attorney-General and Bishop Porteus, by the stout old king and by Mr. Pitt. When she issued a monthly Tract* (which she continued, with her friends' help, for three years), two millions of these were sold in the first year. These efforts, so acceptable to the friends of constitutional order, procured greater attention for her religious works. When she wrote "Cœlebs," it had a success almost unequalled. It came out in two octavo volumes in 1809, and in a few days the first edition was exhausted. It ran through eleven editions in nine months; and during her lifetime 30,000 copies were sold, and the profits amounted to £7000, though the authoress had only one-third of these. In America a single bookseller in New York told her that he had sold 30,000 copies; and she remarks in her later years, that there was hardly a town in the United States in which she had not a correspondent. Her work on

* Some of these, of great sprightliness, were written by Sally More. Mr. H. Thornton contributed both tracts and criticisms.

Practical Piety, though more distinctly religious, ran speedily to ten editions; and her work on Christian Morals, also in two volumes, published about two years after, was almost equally successful. Her last original work, "Moral Sketches," was written in 1819, when she had reached her 75th year. She had by this time been stripped of much domestic happiness. Her last and dearest sister had passed to her rest. Yet this work was characterized with the usual liveliness of her style; and conveyed her opinions to the upper class, for which she wrote, full of sound patriotism and Christian truth. To these writings we must add her Essay on the Character and Practical Writings of St. Paul, which was published in 1815; and this was translated, under the direction of the Chief Justice of Ceylon, Sir Alexander Johnstone, into Cingalese, into which language and the Tamul several of her tracts and poems also found their way. To celebrate the abolition of slavery in Ceylon, she wrote, in her 74th year, a spirited poem, which was translated and recited with enthusiasm in Ceylon at the anniversaries of their liberty. In her 79th year, she collected from her various works passages on prayer, and put them together in a book, issued under the title of "The Spirit of Prayer," which passed through three editions in three months, and of this work 5000 copies were sold. Her Bible Rhythms and religious tracts had a large circulation; and it is pleasant to notice the judgment of so competent an observer as the Rev. John Venn, who, writing from Clapham in 1810, refers a remarkable case of change of character

to one of these tracts. In later years, gratifying testimonials poured in upon her both from England and America. It was found that persons moving in the higher classes of society, and exercising large influence, had received their first impressions of religion from her works. Thus was confirmed the remark made of her in earlier life by John Wesley, that her sphere of good was Society, from which he and his preachers were shut out by the notoriety of their religious views, but into which she had easy access.

The society, which she had touched at so many points by verse and prose, conversation and correspondence, was, during a life so protracted, passing through a reconstruction. "Where," she says in her later years, quoting the words of Dr. Johnson, "where is the world into which we were born?" Not to speak of the world of letters and politics, which she saw in youth—the world of Reynolds and Garrick, Dr. Johnson and Soame Jenyns, Lord North and Lord Camden,—the world of her meridian was changed. The places, once filled in politics by Pitt and Fox, by Burke and Sheridan, by Windham and Wedderburn, were occupied by new leaders of Ministry, and new chiefs of Opposition. Hume and Gibbon, Robertson and Beattie, had been replaced by other historians, and poets of new schools. In place of Goldsmith and Cowper, Wordsworth and Coleridge, Scott and Byron, had risen. In the circles of London, her intimate friends were many of them preserved to her, for great part of her life, by their own length of days—Mrs.

Garrick and Lady Spencer, Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Ord and Mrs. Boscawen, Bishop Barrington, Bishop Burgess, and Bishop Porteus, Mr. Pepys and Dr. Paley, Newton and Rowland Hill, Mr. Grant and Lord Barham, each exceeding the ordinary term of life, in their vigorous age remained with her for many years. But they too dropped away. In 1802, in speaking of the gaps in her circle, the death of her old bookseller Cadell, and Owen Cambridge, and Bennett Langton, and Lord Orford, she looks round with wonder to find herself spared. But soon after, the blows fall thick, and friends disappear. Her valued friend Bishop Porteus is gone from Fulham, Lord Barham from the hills of Kent, Paley from his northern deanery, Pitt and Windham from Parliament, old Newton from the church he had filled so long, Dr. Buchanan from his eastern labours, Henry Thornton in his prime, Bowdler in his opening promise; Bishop Barrington, ripe with the ripened worth of ninety years; Charles Grant — a euthanasia — from hard labour for his Master, in a moment into rest; old Pepys, her steadfast friend, drops into his grave, having gathered from the memories of eighty years lessons of trust through a matured faith. Still with her long-tried friend Wilberforce her correspondence runs on. To him she pours forth her thoughts, and dwells with the confidence of friendship on the events of her life.

Of the once united sisterhood she indeed is now the only survivor. Even her younger sister, who was eyes and hands and feet to her, who helped her

infirmities and carried out her plans, had gone before her. A sharp struggle, which began when Mr. Wilberforce was under their roof, and she passed to her rest. But her bereaved age is not left desolate; friends gather round her; younger friends supply the lack of departed sisters. "No need for her," as Dr. Johnson said, "to keep her friendships in repair;" for a mind so bright, a warm heart, and a chastened spirit, the highway of friendship is always paved. Of correspondents, too, there is no lack. England, Scotland, Ireland, and the United States, supply them; France, Denmark, and Russia add their quota. To Barley Wood, as to a place of pilgrimage, come a throng of visitors. Hannah More writes to Mr. Wilberforce in 1825, that her *levée* from twelve to three is full, and that her young friend reckons her visitors at eighty in the week. Though now in her eighty-second year, she can receive and enjoy her friends. They come and stay with her: Gisborne from the woods of Derbyshire, Babington from Leicestershire, Bishop Ryder from his bright orbit of holy activity, Daniel Wilson from his toil in Islington, Mr. Harford from the beauties of Blaize Castle, Sir Thomas Acland with his beaming smile from "Devon's fair mead," and the busy tide of London. Younger men resort to her. Macaulay, long helped and favoured by her, visits at times his benefactress; others curiosity draws to her house—many, esteem. The eloquent Chalmers, the aged Rowland Hill, many a youth entering life, come to look on the placid face which has seen so many changes, and

weathered the storms of eighty years. Troubles fall on her in the evening time; old domestics reward her love with ingratitude, and her care with scandal; the crew of Comus pollutes the home of piety. She leaves it for ever; "driven, she says, like Eve out of paradise, but not, like Eve, by angels!" One look at the familiar rooms, hung thick with the portraits of friends; a glance at the flower-beds which a sister's care had formed; a minute's pause under the thick-laced trellis, wreathed by loving hands, round which are entwined fragrant memories. Saddened but not desponding, she enters a new home. That, too, is a home of peace; for friends gather round her, and admirers flock to her; so many, that, with the weight of eighty-three years on her, she is forced to set bounds to the stream; she reserves for herself two days in the week entire. One Friend she has long proved, and He does not fail her now. He has been by her bed and her path, and has guided all her steps. Now, as strength declines, she turns to Him and is at peace.

Thankfully she recounts her blessings; not the least among them are her friends, and of these the oldest, her tried friend Mr. Wilberforce, "my guide," she says in 1828, "philosopher, and friend." To him she addresses, in that autumn, one of her last letters, recounting to him her blessings, her new residence, her welcome quiet, worldly cares contracted, wants supplied, young eyes to see for her, young voices to read to her, young heads to care for her, and young hands to minister to her.

It delights her with "immense joy" to think that she will see him once more, and she pours forth for his preservation her loving prayers.

A year later we find her in the excitement of the Oxford election, working with her wonted energy for the return of "the champion of Protestantism:" no girl more eager, no girl more triumphant in success. In 1831 she again saw Mr. Wilberforce; she walked in her room, leaning on his arm, and talked with delight, playful as ever, of present interests and future hopes. Once more they met, in 1832; but then the veil was on the sky, and the mind was under a cloud. At the sound of the well-known voice she rallied. But the memory began to fail, and the mind could not always answer the helm. Yet the eye was bright, and the heart glowed with love. Asked if anything could be done for her, "Nothing," she said, "but love me, and forgive me when I am impatient." At times she felt painfully the confusion of her mind. She could not now entertain her friends, nor could she help the sufferer. *Faire des heureux*, had been her motto, and she could not bear to forsake the pleasant labour. At times she wept—"but if I shed tears, they are tears of gratitude, and from a sense of unworthiness." At other times the mind revived; she led her friends to the windows of her room, and gazed with rapture on the landscape, holding them by the hand, hardly suffering them to go, and asking them soon to return. In these moments her thoughts were expressed in words as bright as in her day of power. "You behold," she said, "a

dying creature. Pray for me; I cannot describe the comfort and support I find from these words, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,'—not I believe, or I hope; but I know. What confidence! I live in the Psalms. 'The heavens declare the glory of God;' how I love that Psalm! I have lived a long life—I might have lived a more useful one; but I have a gracious Saviour, and His peace is in my heart. I feel His presence with me."

In 1833 the buoyant mind showed signs of decay; and nature, long tasked by illness and years, seemed to shrink from further effort. States of stupor followed seasons of wakefulness. But love remained, confirming the poet's words,—

> "They err that tell us love can die,
> With life all other passions fly.
> All others are but vanity;
> But love is indestructible."

At length the end came. In the spring of 1833 her cherished friend Mr. Wilberforce had departed; and in September, in her eighty-ninth year, she entered into her rest—the last sound on her lips, the name of her favourite sister, and the word, so expressive of her life and her hopes—Joy!

CHAPTER VII.

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD ELIOT.—THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD MUNCASTER.

Besides the older friends who influenced Mr. Wilberforce through their character and experience, there were others of his own age, with whom he lived in intimacy; and among them we place in the first rank two who felt for him almost as brothers, and were in return regarded by him with brotherly attachment. We speak of Mr. Eliot and Lord Muncaster.

The Hon. Edward Eliot had been an early friend of Mr. Pitt; and in 1783, when Mr. Wilberforce, then in close relations with Pitt, joined him in his tour to France, Eliot met them at Mr. Bankes's, and formed one of the merry trio who invaded Rheims and Paris. The year after, when Pitt formed his government, he placed Eliot in one of the Lordships of the Treasury; and Eliot continued, as we see from his letter written in 1784, in intimate relations with Wilberforce, who was then abroad. The next autumn, Mr. Eliot drew closer his connexion with Pitt by marriage with his sister, Lady Harriot, to whom Pitt was tenderly attached; and the influence,

which both by this tie and by his character he exercised over Pitt, became useful to Wilberforce when their views on religious questions changed. This occurred when, little more than a twelvemonth after this auspicious marriage, Eliot was plunged into the deepest sorrow by the death of his wife. The blow was keenly felt by Pitt, and made him for several days shut himself up from his nearest friends; but in him the necessities of his position, and the engrossing calls of business, blunted its edge. On the sensitive mind of Eliot the blow told with lasting force. He lived henceforth with Pitt, but his spirits never recovered the grief, and he carried the wound unhealed to an early grave.

In 1787, when Mr. Wilberforce embarked in his benevolent labours, and was starting the Association for the Discouragement of Vice, Eliot writes to him with hearty concurrence, and expresses sentiments which showed how materially his character had changed:—"For me, I am not only willing, but desirous of joining myself to your plan. I have every day less fear of my temper of mind being thought a transitory effect of grief. I feel as if every day looking upon my condition here with more steadiness and resignation, and to a future life with more earnestness and desire. God bless you, and make you happy here as well as hereafter. You have that claim to it, if I may so speak, that you have not required a visitation of Providence to turn you to your God." In the delicate negotiations which often arose between the Premier and the philanthropist, Eliot formed the link to bind them together; and he was

enabled, by his constant access to Mr. Pitt, to influence him in favour of Mr. Wilberforce's plans. Still more, when a difference arose between them on the French war, Eliot was able to moderate the feelings of both, and explain to each the motives of the other; and thus, by an effectual influence, to prevent the difference from widening into variance.

But this gentle character loved the shade. From the more ostensible duties of public business he shrank with modest reserve; and though fitted to take a part in them, both by his abilities and character, he greatly preferred the walk of unobtrusive privacy. When he was not in London, where he lived in Pitt's house, he remained at Broomfield, where he had fixed himself in the neighbourhood of Mr. Thornton, that he might enjoy the congenial society both of him and Mr. Wilberforce. With the latter he lived in intimacy. They attended the Lock Chapel, received the Sacrament together, and in the confidence of friendship opened to each other their thoughts. The qualities of Eliot's mind were little known to the public. After his death, Wilberforce wrote of him: — "Perhaps no one but myself knew him thoroughly; he was so modest, retiring, and unassuming. Neither in point of understanding, nor of religious and moral character, did he generally possess his proper estimation." Wilberforce, however, who knew and trusted him, profited much by his counsels. "Except Henry Thornton," he writes, "there is no one living with whom I was so much in the habit of consulting, and whose death so breaks in with all my plans in

all directions. We were engaged in a multitude of pursuits together; he was a bond of connexion, which was sure never to fail, between me and Pitt."

Eliot, on the other hand, profited by Wilberforce's piety; and in writing of his death, Mr. Grant says to Wilberforce:—"You suffer at many points—I feel for the public and the Church. There being but few such characters, his removal is both a misfortune and a dark omen. He however, I trust, has made a happy exchange. He experiences, we may hope, the ineffable joy of entering into a safe and a blissful eternity. You have one grateful reflection, I believe, in the midst of your distress, that you contributed to make him think betimes of the things of his peace." In 1797 it appeared likely that Mr. Eliot's character would become known to the world. A vacancy occurred in one of the most important posts which Government had to bestow, and the retirement of Lord Cornwallis made it necessary to seek a successor for the Governor-Generalship in India. For this high post Pitt destined Eliot; and Dundas and the Directors approved the appointment. But, just as it was about to be made public, a severe illness came on; and, in place of mounting the vice-regal throne, and ruling swarthy millions, Eliot was carried to the stillness of his own chamber, to commune with himself, and to learn in sickness the way to obtain a mastery over his own heart. The letter, in which he communicated to Wilberforce the feelings which this check had caused, showed that the teaching had been effectual, and that the discipline of the sick room was maturing his spirit

for a higher elevation. Commenting on the bereavement which had made Wilberforce's sister a widow, he refers to his own sorrow:—"When a similar calamity befel me, I now think I was little better than an infidel; but it pleased God to sanctify His visitation, and gradually to draw me by it to a better mind. My present infirmity, I am well nigh convinced, is sent upon the same errand; the necessity for it I sincerely submit to His wisdom—but the effects I certainly feel, and willingly acknowledge, to have been spiritually beneficial. My thoughts have been much more settled, less disposed to wander, and to dwell upon the world, or the enjoyments of sense, and my imagination much less uncontrollable than heretofore. For all this I am truly thankful; and, though not quite free from the remains of my complaints, I do not pray to God to relieve me from them, if it is to be at the expense of these more substantial blessings."

Such thoughts were the precursors, as they were the preparations, of his change. In September of that year in which the Premier hoped to see him Governor-General of India, Pitt received the unexpected intelligence of his death. He was supposed to be recovering, and the blow was the more unlooked for. It quite stunned Mr. Pitt. A friend who was present when he received the tidings, said he never witnessed such overpowering grief. Wilberforce, who loved him with almost equal tenderness, found in the thought of his happiness a soothing consolation. "He was," he says, "I verily believe, a real Christian; and it is a singular satisfaction to me, to have

received, a little before his departure, a letter from him, breathing a spirit of the truest humility and resignation." "I can truly say," he writes to Lord Muncaster, "that I scarcely know any one whose loss I have so much cause to regret. But I have the solid satisfaction of knowing that his mind was just in the state I could have wished, had I been aware of the awful change which awaited him. Peace be with him! May my last end be like his!"

The other intimate friend, whose friendship dated from their college life, was Lord Muncaster. This friendship, which was close as that of Eliot, was happily continued longer, till Lord Muncaster's death, in 1813. Lord Muncaster sat in Parliament for the borough of Colchester, and on all the great questions which engage parliamentary men he acted with Wilberforce. He joined in the struggle for the abolition of the slave trade; he shared Wilberforce's esteem for Mr. Pitt; when Mr. Wilberforce separated from Pitt on the question of peace with France, Lord Muncaster approved his course. The mossy brows and shady glades of Muncaster Castle were often visited by Wilberforce, and he contrasts them in his letters with the dust of London and the hot pavements of Bath. In all the incidents of his career, public and private, he writes to Lord Muncaster: and that *abandon*, which with him is so natural, is to be traced vividly in these letters, written hastily, giving the gossip of the day, on life and politics, his opinions, his criticisms on the debates, on the spirit and temper of public men. He tells his friend of his conflicts in Parliament—his

defeats—his mortification—Pitt's delays—his rising hopes and brightening prospects. With these he mixes the incidents of his private life—his marriage—his comforts—his hours of rest—his flight from London—his quiet walks "by the hoarse resounding shore, meditating better things than purblind Homer knew or sung"—his sports and games of marbles with his boys, which, he says, would make him an object of ridicule in the House of Commons, but which he does not shrink from confessing to his familiar friend. But he intersperses with this domestic chat words of affection, or a touch of seriousness. "In spite of hurry, lassitude, and weak eyes, I must reply," he writes, "to your kind inquiries. I believe you and I are tuned in the same key, as the musicians speak, and that we strike therefore in unison. It is a proof of it, that I feel your pouring out to me your joy in the prospect of a visit from your father, as a stronger proof of your affection than all your expressions of solicitude about myself? To make me thus a partner of your joys, is truly kind." Again, eight years later, reporting the death of a common friend, he says:—"Though I do not see you, my dear Muncaster, on a Sunday, I believe I may truly say I never pass one over without thinking of you. May God bless you, is the hearty wish and frequent prayer of your affectionate and faithful friend." Again, in 1803, reporting Napoleon's threatened invasion from Boulogne:—"Well, my friend, it is my only comfort that all human affairs are in higher hands than ours, and we are assured that all things shall work together for

good to them that love God. Be it our care to secure this, and then we may exclaim in the triumphant language of the Psalmist, Ps. xlvi. 11. Farewell, my friend, I wish I were with you,—my mouth waters to think of your rocks, and mountains, and shady walks."

But it is ever thus: the appeals of Clarkson, the attacks of the Pro-Slavery party, the passions of politics, the ambition and the bitterness of politicians, his own anxieties about the war—his first idea of opposition to Pitt—his sufferings under the estrangement—his private meetings with Pitt—his intervention after Pitt's duel—his personal prospects —his marriage—the illness of his wife—the birth of children—his health—his longing for retirement—his work—his writings in the Christian Observer—his boxes of unanswered letters—the death of friends —the darkness of public affairs—why he voted, and why he abstained—his anxieties on the distresses of the country—the wavering fortunes of the Abolition cause—the changes of Government—the growing variance between Pitt and Addington—the negociations between the King and Pitt—the case of Lord Melville—the victory of Trafalgar, and the dark reverse of Austerlitz—the illness of Pitt—Pitt's death and debts—his own engrossing labours at Broomfield or Palace Yard—his intended rest,—all these pass before us in this diorama of friendship, with its rapidly dissolving views. He contrasts his busy life with Lord Muncaster's leisure in the happy valley of the North, and he flies in a moment, on the wings of fancy, from Clapham Common

or the shore of the Channel, to the woods and forest glades which shaded "Julius Cæsar's old castle in Eskdale."

Again (1800) replying to his inquiry about Parliamentary business, and commenting on Lord Grenville's irritating despatches, he mixes with these disturbing thoughts his own happier tone:—"Alas, Muncaster, my heart aches! However, there is a perfect home of love, and peace, and happiness; and we are invited to the enjoyment of it. Let every fresh proof, therefore, of the unsatisfactoriness of human things have the effect of urging us forward towards this one true point of rest with renewed energy."

In 1804, while detailing to his friend the circumstances of Pitt's second administration, he speaks of himself as enjoying the first greetings of summer and the voices of the nightingales at Broomfield, looking up through nature to its God, and still more thankfully recognizing Him as the God of grace and consolation. "Happy they who pursue those paths which, even here, are alone paths of peace, and which alone will at length conduct us to permanent and solid happiness. Oh! my dear Muncaster, press forward in these ways; the Scriptures, prayer, with humble reliance on our Redeemer and Intercessor, and on the aids of His promised Spirit—these are the sure means of progress."

Answering Lord Muncaster's wise and Christian thoughts, in 1809, he says of politics,—"Oh it is a gloomy sky; but there is a sun behind the clouds. In one particular I quite agree with you, in ascribing

all the great events which are taking place to a higher hand. Indeed, He is always the supreme Agent; but there are times, and this seems to be one of them, when His arm is lifted up and His hand displayed with more than common plainness. This consideration administers the greatest comfort to my mind. For, being persuaded that there are many among us who still love and fear and serve the Great Governor of the universe, I cannot but hope that, though justly deserving the vengeance, we shall still experience the mercy, of Heaven." And speaking, in 1811, of the bankruptcy of a common friend, the blow it had struck on his friend's pleasures, but the expansion it had given to his spiritual life, he says, "I cannot help thinking that in this I see the hand of God. It will lead him to clear away the rubbish, and cleave to the foundation; his spiritual sun, which the fogs and vapours of worldly bustle obscured, will shine out at the close of his natural day. In truth, my dear friend, we are all too apt to forget that the time is short, and that the fashion of this world passeth away, and that here we are but strangers and pilgrims. Farewell, my dear Muncaster; I will not apologize for the serious strain into which I have just given. I know you wish me to say what is uppermost; to pour forth the effusions of the heart. Farewell once more, and may God bless you. When that is said sincerely as I say it, well may it be added, in the phrase of the Orientals, 'What can I say more?'"

The last two letters, which closed this long friendship, were written, one from Sandgate, in

October, 1812, the other a week before Lord Muncaster's death, in September, 1813. In the one he playfully congratulates his friend on the birth of a grandson and heir. "Before I plunged into the *mare magnum*, as Lord Castlereagh would say (of London), I was determined to sail up the river Esk, and pay my respects to the new-born future occupant of the Luck of Muncaster." In the second letter, while observing on the improvement in the character of the clergy and of public men, he turns, as was his wont, from that general reflection, to more personal thoughts; and, with a prophecy not realized in his own case, but soon to be fulfilled in that of his friend, he says,—"However, my dear Muncaster, neither your race nor mine can be much longer. May we both be prepared for the close of life; all else is comparatively insignificant.... As we grow nearer the great change, it is well to make still ampler preparation for it, though it is not necessary that we should for this end retire altogether from public service; but to live under a more abiding impression of the uncertainty of life, and with dispositions better fitted for that condition of being into which we are probably ere long to enter, must certainly be right. For this end, I find nothing more effectual than private prayer and the serious perusal of the New Testament."

On the other hand, the letters of Lord Muncaster show a temper congenial with that of his friend. Nothing can be more touching than the short letter in which he tells the destruction of his hopes in the death of his only son. His help was always

ready in the long anti-slavery conflict. He wrote ably on the question; he supplied help, from the books in his library, to the pamphlet of Zachary Macaulay. He breathes his feelings of affection and thoughtfulness in his last bequest to his friends, Mr. Duncombe "and to my truly valued and much regarded friend, William Wilberforce, Esq., as a small proof and testimony of the very sincere friendship I felt towards them during the time I walked with them in this vale of tears and sorrowing." These things show that he was not seduced by the glare of the world, but took life in its true aspect, a passage of toil and tears.

CHAPTER VIII.

A YOUNGER FRIEND:—JOHN BOWDLER.

NEXT almost in intimacy we must place one who for some years was associated with Wilberforce, though he was a youth when the statesman had passed the meridian of life. He, indeed, soon disappeared, torn from his side by an early death—*ostendunt terris hunc tantum*. He entered the circle of friends like a gleam of sunshine; and so bright and pure was the light, that the luminary, in its brief transit, left a line of glory behind. For, indeed, John Bowdler had rare qualities. "He is really," writes Mr. Wilberforce, "take him altogether, one of the most extraordinary young men I ever knew," "the tenderest, the humblest, and the most self-forgetting." Thus he appeared to the statesman when he first entered his circle. Thus he spoke of him when, in 1815, he had passed away;—a clear discernment, great powers of analysis, a strong memory, a correct taste, the balance of an exact judgment, a vigorous expression of thought; but the flashes of intellect were softened by gentleness of feeling, and by that self-forgetfulness which sought and loved the shade.

Let us retrace for a moment the records of this

short but interesting career. We cannot look at Bowdler's portrait without deciphering his character. The dress of the day was stiff and unbecoming; but the dress is soon forgotten in the expression of the countenance. The eye pensive and full, the forehead large and high, reverence distinctly marked, decision in the compressed lips; the face youthful, but with little trace of thoughtlessness, settled early into the calmness which succeeds, in a strong mind, the conflicts of feeling; and which leaves on the features the marks of the struggle which is past. If we had heard nothing of him, we should have been curious to learn his history; and here it is.

John Bowdler was born in London, in February, 1783. He was a thoughtful child from early years: fond of being alone; of sitting absorbed in day-dreams, forgetting external objects, lost in reverie. Yet fancy was not the only characteristic. He relished calculations; he followed eagerly abstract thought. He had the qualities which make leaders of men — ambition, a high spirit, an indomitable courage, a vehement but irritable temper.

His father was then resident at Sevenoaks in Kent, and in its grammar school the boy received the rudiments of education. Thence he went to Winchester, and derived advantage from the judicious teaching of the head-master. His profession was now to be fixed; and a lucrative branch of the law, that of Proctor, was suggested to him. But this branch does not open the way to the Woolsack; and to the Woolsack his young ambition soared. He

would have greatly liked to go to college, to acquire the classical knowledge for which he thirsted. But his father's circumstances forbade it; and he was articled to a London solicitor, to lodge and work in the heart of the city. In a position so unfavourable to accomplishments, and so fatal to romance, he by indomitable energy managed to master the classics; and he ploughed his way far into philosophy and letters.

The description of the manner in which his day was spent, accounts for his future illness. Writing to a friend in the summer of 1801, in his nineteenth year, he says,—"My eyes are nearly out, for it is past ten at night, and I have written this between sleeping and waking, having been at work almost unremittingly since half-past nine in the morning, which is my daily dose."* To show the labours which he undertook in addition to the routine of an office, he says,—"I have just begun to learn a law book by heart: it contains 30,000 lines, and I hope to get through it twice in six months; but it is most dry, and like learning so many proper names." Yet, not content with this, he must master the classics. "For myself," he writes in the spring of 1802, "I go on much in my old routine, fagging hard at classics, and harder at law. I have lately been attacking 'Trojani belli Scriptorem,' have nearly read through eight books, and have learnt A', which is a very long one, by heart. I have lately also read Juvenal, with some of Perseus, through two or three times, and learnt about 1300 lines, which,

* Remains, ii. 536, 537.

though certainly nothing to be named as real labour, yet is fair enough for the lighter hours of a stupid illiterate quill-driver, bending over a desk in these regions of Cimmerian darkness." Thus, while the hours of a long day are engaged in "mortgages, releases, and assumpsits," he taxes brains and memory in the study and learning by heart of the longed-for classics; dispelling, by their flights of fancy, "the *tædia vitæ*," and breaking, by sunny gleams of poetic light, the gloom of the dull city. But, though congenial with the ardent mind, and pleasant for the fettered genius, to rise out of its prison-cell, on fancy's wings, into the air of heaven, the poor body was forgotten; and, as Dr. John Brown in our day has truly said, the Bible of the body is as sure as the Bible of the soul. So it fell out. Nature, overtasked, exacted and had her revenge. A terrible fever was the result, and that fever left behind it the germs of disease. Slowly, indeed, he recovered; a mother's tenderness, a father's care, were effectual. He rallied, and resumed his work. Removing from the solicitor's office, he entered as pupil with a Chancery barrister; and, after a year so spent, was in 1807 called to the Bar.

But though he had gained his ostensible object, and had only reached his 26th year, it was by a road fatal to his prospects. He had cultivated his mind more than if he had passed three years at the university. In that energetic course of self-culture he had acquired vigorous habits and

knowledge of a wide range. It might be said of him, as he said of Henry Thornton, that his irregular education had given his mind a firmer cast and broader field of thought. But instead of reaching the Bar with powers of work unimpaired, and vaulting, by a strong will and soaring genius, over the perils of those pitfalls into which so many sink and disappear, he reached his profession broken and feeble, with his constitution undermined. The mischief, indeed, was not at once apparent. His prospects were bright. After a short period of disappointment, his voice was heard in the Courts, and business flowed in freely; pupils offered themselves; the appointment of auditor to a large estate secured an income. The talents, which he had cultivated, became known in his profession, and beyond it. The warmth of his affections secured him friends. The two Grants, Mr. Inglis, Lord Calthorpe, attached themselves to him as contemporaries. Grant, Wilberforce, Thornton, and Macaulay were older and more experienced friends. They threw open to him their houses, resorts of a mixed but intelligent society. The lawns of Battersea Rise, and its well-known garden; the house at Kensington Gore, with its stream of guests; in these none were more welcome than the youth whose humility and tenderness were so attractive, from whose genius there might be expected so rich a harvest. "To be remembered at Battersea Rise," Bowdler writes, "with interest and affection, is, I can truly say, in

my estimation, a happiness that would overbalance much severer sufferings and privations than those which I have been called on to support.

"I shall think, during my absence from England," he writes to Mr. Wilberforce, "with peculiar pleasure of the few days passed at Kensington Gore. It was a sort of connecting link between the scenes of past happiness to which my mind often reverts, and those which are yet but images in the land of hope and futurity." "The hours which I have passed under your roof have been among the happiest of my life, and I shall ever esteem the advantages and opportunities of improvement which I have there enjoyed as among the choicest blessings which the mercy of a most merciful Father has showered upon me."

To Mr. Inglis he says,—"I left you and Mrs. Inglis with a heavy heart: only that it is somewhat unmanly to allow of heaviness in an ordinary separation from friends. In truth, I know not when I have passed three days more delightfully than those which were spent under your roof; and the delight, I trust, was not wholly selfish. It arose, in part at least, from witnessing the solid and durable happiness you enjoy. . . . I hope my short visit has in some measure advanced our acquaintance into friendship."

Another friend showed his value for Bowdler by conveying him some hundred miles in his carriage to his destination.

The source of the warm affection felt by his friends towards him is to be found in his own dis-

position to them. He was quick to discern excellence, and generous to appreciate it. He enjoyed his friends' society; he was grateful for their acts of kindness; he entered into their joys, and their sorrows became his own. In mentioning the name of one whom he had known in happier days, but who had since fallen under the cloud which obscures reason,—"That name I can neither write nor think of without great pain. It is, indeed,

'For ever lŏved, for ever dear;
Still breath'd with sighs, still uttered with a tear.'

I do not know what I should do, if brought to the test; but I feel as if I could walk round the world barefoot to restore that noble soul to life and happiness."

But the strongest proof of his sympathy was given in his love of children. Under the roof of Henry Thornton he tasted this pleasure to the full —there he had a group of various ages, various dispositions, and buoyant minds. To talk to them and interest them was his choicest recreation; and, as he says, low spirits fled before "their contagious gaiety." To them in hours of languor he gladly came; nor was there one, from the baby upwards, that did not rejoice to see him appear, and brighten into greater cheerfulness before his genial smile. In that pleasant garden, with the trees bursting into their spring foliage, the flush of verdure, and the fragrance of flowers, would the kindly hostess welcome him, and draw out the sofa on the lawn to rest the worn frame; there, plunged in the reverie which one enjoys out of doors, he would watch the

children's gambols, and smile at their talk, and drop among them words of goodness, and teach them lessons of patience by his equal spirits and heavenly smile.

This discipline of trial rapidly matured his piety. Mrs. Henry Thornton, who of all persons knew him best, writes of him in July, 1812; after giving the opinion of the physician, that if care was continued for two years more, his health might be re-established, and remarking that for her children's sake his life would be most valuable, she goes on:—"For myself, I should be well content to part with him. I think he lives now in the anticipation of the glories of Eternity, and that his heart is so purified from its original stain by the Holy Spirit, his repentance is so sincere, and his faith so strong, that a glorious station awaits him in the mansions of heaven. When he was with us, I read the Scriptures to him several times in the day, and several times his voice and countenance and words seemed rather those of an angel who had lately come from the presence of his Redeemer, than of a poor dying sinful being."

But this sympathy with others, and his disinterested affection, grew out of a deeper soil than earth supplies. His father remarks, that from his earliest years religion had engaged his thoughts. As he advanced in life, his inquiries became more earnest, and his views more clear. Writing to a friend in his nineteenth year, he condemns the folly of those who wrap themselves in the interests of the present time, and do not look

forward to immortality. Comforting another friend under a severe disappointment, he refers to his own mortification, which had blasted his plan of a university career; and he urges on him the lesson, taught to himself by his father, to look at the motives of his efforts, and to aim not at human approbation, but at the final sentence "of the all-wise and righteous Judge." The next year his views became more defined. He speaks to an intimate friend of his mental struggles, the conflicts with his own temptations, his reliance on that fountain which can wash away the darkest sins, and his looking to Jesus Christ as "meek and lowly of spirit, the author and finisher of our faith."

When he had reached the sanguine age of twenty-two, and his hopes were as yet unclouded, he says it is a short-sighted ambition which is satisfied with the applause of Parliament, or guineas of gold. "The only solid ambition is that which presses forward to a glory lasting as our immortal soul, and extensive as its powers. The only avarice which can never satiate, is an avarice of virtue and knowledge, in the perfection of our moral and intellectual principles. A new year should be the commencement of a new life; and what a new life should be, sense and revelation, time and eternity, will testify. May, then, this season be to you the season of present felicity, and the augury of future happiness and honour in every varied situation of your existence."

Two years after, we find him engaged in the study of anatomy; but from its marvels, delighted as he is, he turns to the higher theme, which is

always near his thoughts. "Yet these are not His glory. The creation of an immortal soul is beyond it all, and the mysteries of redeeming mercy infinitely removed above that. These are awful subjects for a letter; but it is good to accustom the mind to contemplate great things. It exalts and refines it. It raises us above the low passions and pursuits of a sordid and grovelling world. It is the parent of the true sublime in action as well as imagination. My good friend, redeem your time."

Writing the same year to Mr. Inglis, and congratulating him on his matrimonial prospects, he says that it formed a suitable period to take "a survey of his earthly existence; a survey we are too apt to neglect," &c. "Let not us do so, my friend. The mortality of the last year may surely have taught us how fleeting are the shadows, how shifting the scenes of the world. . . . The way such lives as Pitt and Fox came to their close, has impressed me with feelings of the vanity of earthly honours, and even of splendid talents and endowments. These will only heighten their responsibility in that world to which they are gone; and it would be a happy check to vanity if, whenever a feeling of superiority crosses the mind, we could consider it as a memento of the duties we have to perform, and the means we enjoy of performing them."

To the same friend, who had consulted him on the subject of ecclesiastical history, after recommending various authors, he says,—"To the humble conscientious Christian, ecclesiastical history is full of instruction. He who first published the glad

tidings of salvation to man has ever watched over. His servants with the tenderest love. His eye is now on me who write, and on you who read. I pray God, we, and all who are dear to us, may continually become more and more sensible of this. I have great need to pray this for myself; and hope, my friend, that you will have the kindness at all times to lend me your assistance."

Again, when sending him a *résumé* of the books he had been reading (a wide range) and criticising, with discriminating acuteness, the different styles of authors, English and Scotch, and admitting his own preference for poetry over politics, literature over law, he winds up,—"But this world was not intended as a theatre of amusement, however our pilgrimage here may be cheered with various pleasures. . . . . Life, I have often thought, is like a well-contrived drama. There is much of varied entertainment; there are sentiments, and characters, and shifting scenes; and even underplots, if cautiously managed, may be admitted; but there is only one great end, and whatever does not tend, either directly or by more distinct consequence, to advance the main plot and work out the crisis, must be rejected as improper."

After the severe illness which darkened his prospects, his tone becomes more tender and true. To a friend he says,—"This will be a very heavy blow. It must greatly injure my professional prospects, and may prove entirely fatal to them. Yet I know not why I should feel uneasy, and am sure I ought not to repine; for He, who has made and governs us,

certainly must know what is best for His creatures. . . . . My mind, I thank God, has been, through my whole confinement, and continues to be, perfectly tranquil and cheerful."

To a clerical friend he says, on the same occasion, —"It has pleased God to send me what, in common language, would be called a severe affliction; but I cannot but humbly hope it is rather a dispensation of mercy. . . . . It is, indeed, my friend, but too probable that an improper eagerness after advancement may have rendered this chastisement necessary, and I sincerely thank you for the faithfulness and honesty of the suggestion. May it work at least in me an humble disposition; and then I shall have little cause to lament any worldly losses it may occasion."

To Mr. Henry Thornton he writes, in reference to some judicious advice offered by his wife respecting tranquillity of mind,—"Though my practice is not as yet worthy of my precepts, it has pleased God to bless me with considerable serenity of mind during my late trials;" and though he felt uneasiness on a review of the past, yet this feeling was subdued and calmed by "reposing with some confidence on the mercy and merits of his Redeemer."

From Malta, 1812, he writes again to the same friend, that the experience of the last winter, and the observation of many incidents, both pleasant and painful, directed to his comfort, have strengthened his trust in the goodness and watchful providence of God. "I have been often struck with the indications of the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, which

are furnished in the passing events of this life; how He defeats the wishes, yet satisfies the wants, of His creatures; how He punishes their sins in ways they little feared, yet makes the way prescribed so to abound with mercy, that it becomes not only a school of instruction, but a source of every grateful affection."

In his religion there was a manliness and a strength peculiarly his own. Thus, in speaking of affliction, he says we must not rely on the affections, which are then perplexed and disturbed, but ride by the "sheet-anchor of the soul, a deeply-rooted and settled intellectual conviction of the wisdom and goodness of God." As a guard against relapse or retrograding in the Christian life, he says "the fear of God is the great barrier planted behind us." Gradually his mind opens to the tenderness of the Divine character. The terms in which Scripture speaks of the goodness of God, prove "a benevolence which vastly transcends a mere readiness to reward those who obey Him. Are we not justified in saying, that where there is but a willingness to obey—aye, perhaps, but a faint willingness—He will watch, and cherish, and encourage, and improve it, and wait to be gracious, and bear with many infirmities, and finally abandon no one till every hope of reformation is past." "The more I see and feel, the more deeply I am persuaded that the only true wisdom, virtue, and happiness of man is to be found in the absolute surrender of himself, and everything that can affect him, into the hands of his Creator; accepting His will as the law of his life with a cheerful humility,

and resting on Him with implicit confidence for the bestowal of whatever is good."

Writing to a very dear friend, speaking of his own feeble health, the sadness of separation from others, and his hopes of improvement in health, he says,—"Life is made up of adieux: and thus hope travels on, one of our kindest companions in this land of shadows." Speaking of our blindness, and the uncertainty of future things,—"This would be a heavy world, notwithstanding the soft scenes of fancy and joy that here surround us, were there no brighter hopes beyond. The disproportion between our faculties and our powers of enjoyment would produce a sort of continual disappointment; but the prospect of an everlasting rest makes the little distractions of this world seem to be a passing cloud." "Oh! what should we be without a Saviour! Surely, if that source of hope and consolation were withdrawn, it would be almost as fearful to taste the mercy of God as to feel His chastisements."

While thus under the discipline of trial, his character was matured, his intellectual powers grew with rapid development. After his death, both the great Reviews (the Edinburgh and the Quarterly) gave an article of emphatic commendation to his life and labours. To one of these, if not to both, he had been a contributor. The Quarterly compared him to Kirke White, but adjudged him the palm. The article on Bowdler in the Edinburgh Review is attributed to Lord Brougham: both writers bear witness to the versatility and strength of his intellect. The two Essays which are preserved in his Remains—the one, an

analysis of Dugald Stewart's Philosophy; the other, a sketch of French Literature—treat two very distinct subjects with masterly power. To these we may add various Essays on his favourite theme of religion, among which, those on the "Supposed Connection between Religion and Melancholy," on the "Eternity of Future Penalties," and on the "Atonement of Christ," may be read with profit in the present day. His Essays on "Submission to God," on "Trust in God," on the "Love of God," on "Faith," on "Hope," on "Spiritual Mindedness," on "Humility," on "Thankfulness," and on "Prayer," touch the hinges of the Christian's life, and give to them a rich illustration.

His poetry was unequal. There are, however, in his pieces of later years, verses of great beauty. Those referring to his illness, the "Lines to his Mother," the fragment which begins,—

> "Children of God, who pacing slow
> Your pilgrim path pursue," &c.,

will satisfy the most correct taste. His Paraphrases of the 42nd and the 123rd Psalms, and his exquisite lines beginning,

> "As panting in the sultry beam,
> The hart desires the cooling stream,"

have long been admitted among the choicest hymns of English literature. These efforts, we must bear in mind, were made when he was under thirty years of age, and when he was staggering under a disease which had sown the seeds of decay in the suffering body. To have overcome the languor of illness, and

to have risen high into regions of fancy and thought, was no mean achievement of a vigorous faith. We add two specimens of Bowdler's poetry: one on a sacred subject, the other of a more general kind:—

"Child of man, whose seed below
Must fulfil their race of woe;
Heir of want, and doubt, and pain,
Does thy fainting heart complain?
Oh! in thought, one night recall,
Night of grief in Herod's hall:
There I bore the vengeance due,
Freely bore it all for you.

Child of dust, corruption's son,
By pride deceived, by pride undone,
Willing captive, yet be free,
Take my yoke, and learn of me.
I, of heaven and earth the Lord,
God with God, the eternal Word,
I forsook my Father's side,
Toiled and wept, and bled and died.

Child of doubt, does fear surprise,
Vexing thoughts within thee rise;
Wondering, murmuring, dost thou gaze
On evil men, and evil days?
Oh! if darkness round thee lower,
Darker far my dying hour,
Which bade that fearful cry awake,
My God, my God, dost Thou forsake?

Child of sin, by guilt oppressed,
Heaves at last that throbbing breast?
Hast thou felt the mourner's part,
Fear'st thou now thy failing heart?
Bear thee on, beloved of God,
Tread the path thy Saviour trod;
He the tempter's power hath known,
He hath poured the garden groan.

"Child of heaven, by me restored,
Love thy Saviour, serve thy Lord;
Sealed with that mysterious name,
Bear thy cross, and scorn the shame.
Then, like me, thy conflict o'er,
Thou shalt rise to sleep no more;
Partner of my purchased throne,
One in joy, in glory one."

The following lines are addressed to one to whom he was attached:—

"Thine are youth and beauty now,
Friends and lovers round thee bending,
Hope sits smiling on thy brow,
Hope with joy her triumphs blending;
Thy blue eye is speaking pleasure,
Gladness bids thy bosom swell;
Is then life so rich a treasure?
Dearest maiden, use it well.

Ah! forgive if I offended;
'Twas but truth and love I meant;
If too high my wish ascended,
If too bold the prayer I sent,
By my own proud thoughts confounded,
Judge the pangs I justly feel,
Spare a heart too deeply wounded,
Soothe the wound you will not heal."

We revert to his history. In 1807 he was called to the Bar. In 1810, his sister, to whom he was tenderly attached, and who had long been a sufferer, drew near her end. The watchful friendship of Mr. Wilberforce detected in Bowdler himself symptoms of pulmonary disease. On consulting a physician, these auguries were confirmed. An insidious inflammation was in progress; and the remedies prescribed necessarily weakened the patient. He was

directed at once to suspend his profession, and to go abroad for the winter. He came back to England in August, 1811; but was forced in October to return to the Mediterranean, and between Malta and Sicily he spent that winter and spring. In the summer of 1812 he was too weak to resume his labours in the Courts, and, weary of exile, he spent the next winter near Portsmouth, under the roof of an affectionate relative. Her nursing restored him more than a foreign climate, and he was enabled to resume his profession with some vigour, and so continued his efforts through the succeeding year (1814). A gleam of hope then broke upon him, and beyond it a brighter prospect. Before his health gave way, he had met at Kensington Gore, and afterwards under her father's roof, one who seemed every way fitted to share and cheer his home. He was attracted to her by her qualities; while the genius and affection, which had made for him so many friends, awakened, as was natural, in the one whom he admired, a deeper and more absorbing attachment. Before either party was aware, the affections of both were engaged; but the realities of life often dispel its romance, and the difficulty of a pecuniary provision intervened to blight the hopes of both. Before these could be removed, Bowdler's health had given way; and then, with the disinterestedness of his character, he resolved that, with health so broken and prospects so precarious, he ought not to involve one who might fairly aspire to brighter fortunes. He tried to escape meetings which might be hazardous; and when they met, he endeavoured to conceal

his feelings in what he fancied was an impenetrable reserve. But such feelings, where there is an attachment on both sides, are not to be disguised. The eyes, which are most interested, detect the secret. At all events, he was silent. But returning health revived his hopes, and the constancy of affection triumphed over the difficulties of finance. Parental opposition was withdrawn, and the path of happiness seemed at length to open before him.

Just at this moment, when for the first time in his life his domestic prospects seemed assured, there fell upon him a sudden, to his friends a saddening, revulsion. Years of intimacy, unity of taste, many acts of kindness, had endeared to him the character and the family of Henry Thornton. But in the autumn of the year 1814 Mr. Thornton's health gave way. By his sick bed, none of his many friends were more assiduous than John Bowdler. He felt how much he owed him for the guidance of life—what wise counsels, what a sustaining example; what recourse, under every difficulty, to his clear and upright mind. Under his roof he had passed his happiest hours; in his family circle he had met with an unfailing cheerfulness; to his partner he had turned for the tenderest sympathy. And when all this was changed; when he saw such a life arrested in its prime; so wide a course of usefulness abruptly stopped; a blow so heavy inflicted on a large circle of friends; above all, when he saw the light of a domestic sphere suddenly struck down, and the shadow of a great grief falling on a sunny home; the prospect darkening slowly, broken by gleams

of hope that made the returning disappointment more severe; the uncertainty, the doubt, the growing anxiety, the sickness of hope deferred; the gay voices hushed, the steps muffled; the blitheness gone; smiles succeeded by tears; the bitter anguish of one devoted heart;—all these things, seen daily, and dwelt upon by one who sympathised intensely, tore up, as by a sharp knife, the heart-strings of a sensitive soul.

After weeks of watching and intervals of doubt, in the middle of January (1815) Henry Thornton died. On the day after his funeral, which Bowdler was too ill to attend, he was summoned to comfort and advise his widow. In that office of friendship he met Mr. Wilberforce at Kensington Gore; and they spent the evening together in that desolate home, under the shadow of a great grief. On the following morning Mr. Wilberforce carried Bowdler to London, and they parted for the last time on earth. The long anxiety and harassing excitement had interrupted the state of rest so necessary for Bowdler's recovery, and had done their work. Now, with one sharp stroke, the strings of life gave way. At one on the following morning, when Bowdler was alone in his chambers, a blood-vessel burst in the lungs. He lay for hours helpless, without the power of obtaining assistance. Then medical aid came, and all that skill could do was done; he was removed to a friend's house in Grosvenor-square. On the 31st the disease seemed to have abated, and the immediate danger

was supposed to have passed. The next day he was gone; the chastened spirit fled to its home. Apparently a melancholy issue; for it blighted the fairest prospects, and dashed at once a devoted affection and the hopes of many friends. Yet not sad to the sufferer; for he whispered to an intimate friend, that, during the long hours which passed in his chamber, while he lay alone, before assistance came, to his spirit the Saviour appeared so near and so loving, that all thoughts of care or fear or grief were lost in that sublime affection. We can enter the better into the feelings of Mr. Wilberforce, when, reflecting on their last meeting at Kensington Gore, and standing mournfully by the side of his "lifeless and ghastly frame," he says—"Oh! sit anima mea cum Bowdlero!"

There remains in connection with Bowdler a question of some interest. Considering his training, we may feel surprise at finding him the confidential inmate of Mr. Wilberforce's circle. He had been brought up from childhood "in the strictest High Church principles of the Church of England."* He had been taught equally to avoid a Papist and a Presbyterian. The views of the Nonjurors on the settlement of the Revolution and on the deposition of the Stuarts were impressed upon him early. "His opinions," as he says, "were fixed;" and from these opinions his judgment did not swerve. No doubt, in his view of the great verities of Christianity, he concurred entirely with Wilberforce. The

* Correspondence, vol. i. pp. 210, 211.

confession of his faith, and the ground of his hope, were the same. But when Wilberforce, relying on this agreement, placed in his hands the writings of the Puritan divines, which he especially valued, Bowdler received them with a smile which marked his courtesy, but also his convictions; hopeful, he said, that their piety might help forward his practice, sure that their views of truth would not change his.

Still the fact remains, that, in the houses of Battersea Rise and Kensington Gore, Bowdler was a constant guest; that, on all questions which occupied or disturbed him, the judgment he first sought was that of Henry Thornton; that for sympathy, and social refreshment, he turned to the host and hostess of Battersea Rise, and to the genial lord of Kensington Gore. Under their roofs he passed his happiest hours; to their society he turned as the well-spring of his fullest joy.

"Among the temporal blessings," he writes in 1810, to Mrs. Henry Thornton, "for which I may still hope, there is none which engrosses my anxiety or affects my feelings more strongly than the continuance of your health, and Mr. Henry Thornton's." "I cannot well describe," he writes in 1812, "to you the mingled feelings which I experience on visiting Battersea Rise, the delight and improvement I enjoy in Mr. Henry Thornton's conversation and in yours, the innocent and infectious gaiety of all the young people."

To Mr. Wilberforce he writes (1810),—"I owe you a great deal for all your kindness and affection;"

—and just on the point of leaving England, when his heart was full and the pen spoke the thoughts, he wrote:—"My dear Sir,—We shall probably not meet again for many months, and it may be the will of God that in this world we shall meet no more; let me assure you that you and Mrs. Wilberforce, and your little circle too, will be very very often present to my thoughts, and never without feelings of the warmest gratitude and affection. The hours which I have passed under your roof have been among the happiest of my life, and I shall ever esteem the advantages and opportunities of improvement which I have there enjoyed as amongst the choicest blessings which the mercy of a most merciful Father has showered on me." *

In 1811, when he was about to sail for Sicily, he writes thus to Mr. Wilberforce:—"I shall think, during my absence from England, with peculiar pleasure of the few days passed at Kensington Gore. It was a sort of connecting link between the scenes of past happiness, to which my mind often reverts, and those which are yet but images in the land of hope and futurity. Æneas amused himself, when he was much busier than I am, with watching the shades of his expected progeny, and hearing what wonderful things they were to perform on earth. Why may not I amuse and solace the moments of languor by visions as innocent at least, and, if not associated with hopes of worldly grandeur, connected with those dispositions and affections which are best fitted

* Life of Wilberforce, vol. iii. p. 468.

to brighten and tranquillize this life, and prepare us for a better." And again, when asking Mr. Wilberforce to mention to him his faults, he says,—"I think I could bear reproofs from you, as the veriest cur will take a whipping contentedly from the hand he loves."

No doubt, Mr. Wilberforce had attracted Bowdler, as he attracted so many, by his genial disposition and the warmth of his sympathy. It is, as Bowdler remarked, so "inexpressibly delightful to feel oneself beloved; to feel and to be the object of every benevolent affection, is surely among the purest and best of earthly satisfactions. I had rather enjoy the affection of one person, than the applause of a thousand." That Mr. Wilberforce's affection for him was strong, we learn, not only from their intimacy, but from his own words. When Bowdler first went abroad, Wilberforce wrote to Lord Muncaster, that his heart was heavy at the loss of so dear a friend. "But for my being married, I have thought that I would go as his companion." And after his death, he says,—"I loved him so warmly, that it quite delights me to find him estimated at his true value." Bowdler's correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thornton proves how much he was valued by both, and how his opinion was sought on the most delicate questions of Mr. Thornton's political life. In every great transaction in which he and Mr. Wilberforce were engaged—the fortunes of the Abolition conflict, the struggle to open India to missionaries, and the incidents of home politics—Bowdler was the head to

which they went for counsel, and the pen employed to draw up their opinions. Still, when we consider that Bowdler's tastes were for literature and philosophy,—that for politics, and the busy activities in which members of Parliament are engaged, he had little inclination,—we are the more surprised that the intimacy was so entire. Usually the contemplative man regards the man of action with some distaste. He thinks his course too restless, and too full of excitement: and when the active man is of a distinct religious school, we might predict that there would arise regard perhaps between them, but no intimacy. Yet the intimacy was complete.

How it came about that Bowdler had entered this circle, and remained in it, we learn from another case in which the character and opinions resembled his own. Reginald Heber was a man of refined pursuits and elegant tastes. He had long watched the course of Wilberforce from his quiet Rectory at Hodnet. He had not been led to view it with favour. Heber was of a different school; attached to Church discipline, and to the ritual of the Church. He regarded Wilberforce as honest, but enthusiastic; earnest in his convictions, but extreme—over-valuing one part of the Church's work, under-valuing the other; sincere, but erratic. With such feelings he had little sympathy; nor did he relish so bustling and engaged a life. But on one occasion he was drawn by chance into the philanthropist's circle, and he saw close before him the real man. It was a testing moment. Along with one of the Thorntons he entered Wilber-

force's house in Palace Yard, just after the decisive vote in the House of Commons had yielded a large majority in favour of the Abolition Bill. Crowds were pouring into the House to congratulate its owner. Members of Parliament, friends, strangers, all pressed in, mingling with each other under a common sympathy, and overcoming the pruderies of society under the impulse of a great excitement. There they were, meeting, talking, shaking hands, and rejoicing. It was like the escape of a swarm from a hive on a hot summer day; but the central figure, whom everyone wished to reach, was found, in this heat, perfectly calm. He was busily writing beside a table covered with papers, kneeling on one knee on a chair—no thought of himself, no sign of boasting, not a word of vehement exultation; but thankfulness, and gentleness, and a great quietness. Once, indeed, he interfered in the conversation, but for a characteristic object. Two hundred and eighty-three members had voted for the Bill; sixteen against it. "Let us make out the names of these sixteen miscreants," said one of his eager friends: "I have four of them." At once Wilberforce stopped his writing, and looked up. "Never mind the miserable sixteen; let us think of our glorious two hundred and eighty-three." And then, turning to the faithful friend with whom from the outset he had walked, with whom he had taken counsel and grieved and rejoiced together—"Well, Henry, what shall we abolish next?" No wonder that, as Heber retired from this

scene, which had greatly impressed him, he said—"An hour's conversation can dissolve the prejudice of years."

But with Bowdler it was not the conversation of an hour. He saw Wilberforce daily, and in domestic life. The philanthropist had taken kindly to the youth, and had appreciated his qualities. In that pleasant garden of Broomfield, which stretched along Henry Thornton's domain, and melted into one their united shrubberies, Bowdler had observed the statesman, disengaged and free, in playful intercourse with his children and friends. Here memorials were drawn up, and deputations were planned, and petitions were arranged for Parliament, and appeals were prepared for the country, and motions for committees were decided on; and deputies were sent to gather facts and move foreign governments, and evidence was collected from every corner of the earth; pamphlets were ordered from ready pens, and in this busy workshop the hammers were plied that were to mould or break the public mind. Into this *officina gentium* Bowdler was admitted, and he was able, by his own observation, to judge of the work and the workmen.

He found Mr. Wilberforce in his house in Palace Yard, where every sort of person, on every sort of errand, used to go—Premiers and Home Secretaries, and Secretaries of the Treasury, and members of the Independent party, and active leaders of Opposition, and colonists and foreigners, churchmen and dissenters, all with their several objects. Hard-working

men from the City or the country met there to hunt up evidence, to examine witnesses, to read through Blue Books, pick out the kernels, and arrange these for the House and the country. Copper-coloured philanthropists from the West Indies, Lascars from the East, woolly-haired mahogany-coloured Negroes from Africa; Baptists and Methodists from Calcutta, Jamaica, and Sydney; long-headed merchants from the City, beaming philanthropists from Coleman's Buildings or Lincoln's Inn Fields; broad-brimmed Quakers from Norfolk, men of broad-cloth and broader dialect from Bradford and Leeds, expected or unlooked-for, invited or uninvited, morning or noon, at breakfast or after breakfast—all flocked there to see the Member for Yorkshire, and to gain his ear for their special scheme. Each wanted to catch and fix the mercurial statesman. He meanwhile, darting, like a sunbeam, out of his room, where he had spent a morning hour engaged in reading Scripture and in prayer, came out refreshed, and ready for the work of the day. His voice like music, his smile beaming cheerily, a kindly word for each, and a courteous greeting, he met and welcomed all. As soon as the slight form appeared, there was a stir and a rush; each tried to reach him, and to put in his claim to be heard. For each had a case that was the most important in the world; so he that could, buttoned the statesman, and poured his budget into his ear:—

"He cannot choose but hear."

Not so; for though the speaker might hold him

tight, it was rare that he succeeded in making "the wedding guest stand still;" for Wilberforce moved, as Bishop Jebb said, with the look of an angel and the agility of a monkey. Both mind and body turned with quick gyrations; like the creatures that we see in a sunbeam, now here, now there, now settling, now with wings poised, now in flight: to follow them with our eye is difficult; to catch them, vain. For, though Wilberforce's mind was rapid, and active both to read and observe, it was desultory. The thoughts were so many, the perception so quick, that the instant a subject was thrown off, the mind started on the wing—seized the idea as if by intuition, and flew off in search of more. And, discovering at a glance the subjects that were connected with it, it passed on through these; perching now on one, then on another, it flitted nimbly from spray to spray—so that you might readily determine at what point of a subject he would begin, but it was hard to say where he would end. Still, as each visitor came up and had his turn, he went away contented; for each poured his story into a willing ear. Tedious or brief the story; good tidings or bad; tales of virtue, tales of crime, wrongs endured, rights withheld, the tyrant's cruelty, the victim's pangs—all were laid before him; and, as the speaker looked on the changing and eager countenance of the listener, he saw reflected in it the answering sympathy. The look, the start, the gesture, and the word, betrayed the feelings of the man; and before the tale was half told, the emotion had risen—sorrow or joy, pity or

wonder, thankfulness or regret, chased each other across his face, as clouds, pursued by storms, drift across an autumn sky. So the speaker went away satisfied that he had left an impression. And to Wilberforce it mattered not who the speaker was, and whence he came; if he had a wrong to tell, or a plan of good to offer, he was welcome there. No race so outcast, that he would not give them his sympathy; no child of man fallen so low, that he would not stretch to him the helping hand. So they came to him in troops, and he welcomed all. And on this curious diorama our young spectator Bowdler looked on, wondering.

Wearied with his incessant work, Wilberforce fled from his house in Palace Yard. At Battersea Rise he first pitched his tent; but there was no rest for him there. Clapham was known, and to Clapham the throng of petitioners flocked. Clapham became intolerable. He gave up Broomfield, and fled. He moved his tent to Kensington Gore; there surely he would find quiet, for that was an out-of-the-way suburb, not in the stream of London life. No pretentious squares in those days were there to be seen, nor ambitious crescents; no stately equipages rolled along spacious roads; but an easy slope spread itself to the southern sun, with groves and shades and forest trees. There the veteran could dream of the distant landscape of his youth,* his favourite woods and hills of the North; for there the rooks wheeled, and walnut trees grew, and poplars and shady elms:—

* His busy fancy traced in Kensington Gore a resemblance to the landscape of the Westmoreland Lakes.

> "Quâ pinus ingens albaque populus
> Umbram hospitalem consociare amant
> Ramis."

There, far from smoke, the statesman fancied he could rest, sit under his favourite tree, and read and write at his ease. Vain hope! No sooner settled there, than the concourse came. His rooms were filled by crowds which beset his table, and overflowed into his verandah and garden; they came from every quarter, of every creed and tongue. Mahomedans and Christians—Yankees with nasal twang—the functionaries of Dissenting committees—big burly Baptist ministers, to complain of the wrongs done to their brethren in India—ill treated clergymen from New South Wales—ex-governors from the balmy shores of Ceylon, and the imperial throne of the Government-house in Calcutta—Lascars, to present in person the story of their wrongs—Canadian travellers, to plead the havoc brought on the North American Indians by the greed of our traders—Moravian missionaries from Greenland, to pray that he would lay their case before Mr. Rose at the Treasury—Methodists from Jersey, to complain of the Sunday drills ordered by Dundas—Germans, to sue for suffering German refugees—foreigners, in broken English to plead for distressed and imprisoned Russians—members of the African Institute, to remind him of the necessities of Sierra Leone—Sir Alexander Johnson, to detail the wants of Madagascar—Quakers, to interest him in the better system of managing lunatic asylums—Allen, to explain the plans of Lancastrian schools—benevolent ladies, to plead for the introduction of reli-

gious instruction to convicts in our prisons—benevolent gentlemen, to ask him to bring in a Bill for the relief of small debtors—Sir Francis Burdett, with vehement eloquence to rouse him on the state of the Cold-Bath Fields Prison—Jeremy Bentham, to explain to him a model of a perfect penitentiary—the chemists, assailed by the apothecaries, to state their case, and ask his mediation with the Government—the Nonconformists, endangered by Lord Sidmouth's Bill on conventicles, to entreat his interference—Monk Lewis, to ask his counsel for the management of his Jamaica slaves—Lord Belgrave, to take his advice on his Bill to limit Sunday trading—Dr. Buchanan, fresh from the East, to discuss the prospects of India—Macaulay, on his return from Sierre Leone, to settle with him the fate of Africa—Blanco White from a Spanish monastery—Wordsworth from his home on the Lake of Rydal—Spurzheim, to interest him in bumps and skulls—the blind Arthur Young, to hear the musical voice which enlivened his sorrow—a runaway daughter of a noble house, to ask his powerful intercession.

Nor was the levee confined to visitors on public concerns; private troubles brought to him hosts of applicants. One came to beg a small loan of £100;—the Duke of Kent, to occupy his morning with details of his private affairs;—lads beginning business, to ask a loan of capital;—a sick youth starting for Madeira, to get books selected by Wilberforce. The emperor of the brief Haytian empire writes to him for schoolmasters and professors. To

him come the gentle ladies who teach the savage outcasts on the hills of Somerset; to him come the struggling pastors who feed their flocks on the hills of Cumberland. Yet, while he is writing to emperors, and dictating letters to Talleyrand, he finds time to travel miles to comfort a mourning widow, and he sits down to pray and sympathise by the bedside of a dying servant. Letters come in clouds—fall on his table thick as a snow-drift. Lafayette asks his interference from the depths of an Austrian dungeon. A sufferer writes from Yarmouth—and his case engrosses him for a day. A boy is unlawfully enlisted: his release must be got from the War Office. A colonist is injured: Wilberforce must see both Pitt and Dundas. One man writes forlorn and friendless; but he is sure Wilberforce will be his friend. Another is wronged by Government: Wilberforce must go to Perceval to get him righted. A convict is under sentence of death: Wilberforce must fly to Secretary Ryder to beg a reprieve. General Boyd has a grievance: Wilberforce must move the House for a Committee. A Massachusetts negro wants a license for a shop: Wilberforce must procure it. Sailors are in dire distress: he must get relief for them from the Premier Addington.

In vain do his friends murmur, and argue, and entreat. The stout old Dean writes scolding letters from Cambridge; Lord Muncaster remonstrates from Cumberland; Stephen comes to reprimand and warn him; Hannah More is sure he will kill

himself; Gisborne and Babington shake their heads and protest. A frame of iron, with nerves of brass, cannot stand this incessant wear and tear. In vain. He hears, but he goes on. Duties press; sympathies rise; he must work till he drops. So the daily round continues, and the levee never ends. As some go, others come, till it stops by exhaustion; not that the visitors cease, but that the host has fled. But he is gone only to fresh engagements; to the Board Room of the African Institution; to his place in the Parliamentary Committee Room; to a conference with some philanthropists; to a crowded meeting of Members of Parliament; to introduce a bevy of Yorkshire manufacturers at the Board of Trade; to head a deputation of Abolitionists to the First Lord of the Treasury; to argue and remonstrate at the Home Office; to see the Premier, and press for a squadron on the coast of Africa; to get an Order of Council, long promised, for the West Indies; to snatch a moment, while he waits in the Minister's ante-room, in order to write a kind note to an absent friend, or to send a word of loving caution to his boy at school; to take his seat in a Committee on the state of the poor; to join in examining the witnesses; at intervals to glance at one of the huge bundle of unread letters which swell his pocket, and to dash off a reply. Then away to Freemasons' Hall, to say a few words of cheering encouragement to assembled Christians; or to the Mansion House, to stir up royal dukes and wealthy peers to head a needful subscription for

distressed foreigners. In these labours the day is spent and drops into evening; and night finds him in his usual place, by old Bankes, in the House, ready to speak and vote on the questions of the night.

So the round goes on; and through it the fragile being toils, and plods, and wades, till the Sabbath comes and sets him free, and blithe as a lark he rises into the heavens, and carols loud his song of joyous praise. At length autumn appears, and sends the worn labourer to his holiday; and there, as he has seen him at work, Bowdler visits him at play.

"Mr. Wilberforce," he writes, "enjoys his parsonage as much as possible; certainly he is as happy as I ever beheld a human being." One day at Wotton, another at Stowe. "Mr. Wilberforce made the shades resound to his voice, singing like a blackbird wherever he went. He always has the spirits of a boy."

The orthodox Bankes looked in on this perpetual bustle, and these groups of uncouth acquaintances, and pronounced it a menagerie: "What odd people Wilberforce collects about him." Bowdler looked in, and understood the scene. "Kept by Mr. Wilberforce much longer than I intended; but he is like the old man in Sinbad's voyage—woe be to the traveller that falls into his grasp; it required a considerable effort to disengage myself." In one thing they agreed, the young man and the old: both had learned the same lesson, which a German

poet* has sung in verses worthy of remembrance :—

"Hallelujah! I believe;
Now, O Love, I know thy power;
Thine no false or fragile fetters,
Not the rose-wreaths of an hour.
Christian bonds of holy union
Death itself does not destroy;
Yes, to live and love for ever
Is our heritage of joy."

* Möwes.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CABINET COUNCIL.—JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ.

No man has ever done anything on a large scale, in public life, single-handed. Alone he cannot act permanently on public opinion. His writings may be forcible, his eloquence effective; but the attempt to carry with him the mind of the public and of Parliament, is like a march through an enemy's country. He must have soldiers as well as pioneers, and the mattock and pickaxe of the engineer as well as the advance of the battalion.

Wilberforce was fully conscious of this necessity; and indeed his temperament prescribed it as much as his judgment, for he was eminently social. He delighted to act with others, and to consult them, profiting by their counsels and using their help. He had, in this respect, the qualities of a leader; and with a quick intuition he discerned the qualifications of men, and applied these to their right uses. Hence he had his cabinet of philanthropy, composed of several persons with various gifts. It was not so brilliant in rank as that of Mr. Pitt or Lord Liverpool; but it was composed of materials as serviceable, and more durable. The caprice

and selfishness which broke up the cabinet of the great Premier were not found in the cabinet of his early friend. It is remarkable also, that the individuals who composed it lived longer than ordinary politicians. Only a small section of Pitt's cabinet survived through the cabinets of Lord Liverpool. Many of those who joined Wilberforce in 1789, in the outset of his public life, were associated with him at its close in 1825.

Wilberforce's first advisers, when he began his assault on the slave trade, were of different professions. Pitt and Grenville consulted with him; so did Fox, Wyndham, and Burke. As subordinate Members of Parliament, he had William Smith, Eliot, and Lord Muncaster; Henry Thornton at a later period, and Thomas Babington. In 1799, Zachary Macaulay joined him, and Henry Brougham lent the cause his energies. But beyond this circle he had miscellaneous councillors—Lady Middelton, and Hannah More with her popular pen, and the Rev. Mr. Ramsay, who fell a martyr to his principles, and Granville Sharpe, and the indefatigable Clarkson. He was encouraged by the sympathy, or helped by the influence, of the aged Wesley, of John Newton, of Mr. Hey in Yorkshire, and Mr. Gisborne in Staffordshire. When he took up the question of India Missions, his interior cabinet, composed of Thornton, Babington, Stephen, and Macaulay, received the addition of Bowdler and John Thornton, Charles Grant the elder, and Lord Teignmouth. On questions more directly ecclesiastical, he consulted with John Venn, occasionally with Simeon. On

matters more immediately personal, his chief advisers were Henry Thornton, Stephen and Babington, Venn and the elder Grant. In 1800 the cabinet of philanthropists set up as an organ the *Christian Observer*, of which Zachary Macaulay was for many years the editor, and to which Hannah More, Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, Stephen, Gisborne, Babington, Bowdler, and Robert Grant contributed.

Mr. Stephen, both from his legal acumen, his energy, and his perseverance, brought to this cabinet efficient help. The literary distinction which his son, Sir James Stephen, afterwards attained, and his eminent service in one of the most important departments under the Crown, must not be allowed to obscure the unostentatious labours of his honoured father. Mr. Stephen had practised in the legal profession, and had passed the first part of his life as a barrister in a West Indian colony. There he had become acquainted with the condition of the negro, and had learned thoroughly to understand his circumstances and sufferings. When he arrived in England, on a short visit, in 1789, he supplied to Mr. Wilberforce important information. In 1794, when the Abolition cause was languishing, and its further progress was sharply arrested by the dread of the French Revolution, the help of a zealous coadjutor was greatly needed. At that crisis Mr. Stephen appeared, and thenceforth settled in England. He communicated his return to Mr. Wilberforce in a letter which expresses, with the fervour of his eager feelings, his sentiments of confidence and esteem. The strength of his convictions supplied

a wholesome stimulus to a drooping cause, which had begun with promise, and was suddenly checked. He brought to it the service of his pen; and pamphlets, vigorously written, and following each other in steady succession, informed as well as excited the public mind. Mr. Stephen, indeed, took an unfavourable—Mr. Wilberforce thought an unfair—view of Mr. Pitt's disposition towards the Abolition cause; but whatever might be the feelings of men in office, and whatever obstacles they either felt or feigned to justify their delay, no cause could long be suffered to droop which had this sturdy rower on board, with his unflagging spirit and strenuous arm. His quick eye detected, under plausible pretences, the real objects of the planter, and he denounced with unsparing vigour the proposed concessions of the minister, as well as the arts of the opponents. So, in the various steps of this great contest, his acuteness and his frankness were equally useful. On the crafty plans of Dundas; on the scheme of deporting slaves from older islands to occupy newer lands; on the fatal proposals of Spain; on the necessity of further clauses in the treaty with Portugal; on the attempted convention, in 1814, for the abolition of the slave trade; on the Bill for the registering of slaves—on all these he was ready, with pen and voice, in letter, pamphlet, and newspaper, to ring out the note of alarm, and to sound this, clear and shrill, in the ears of Wilberforce, in Downing Street, and in Parliament.

To be sure, the temper of the leader and his followers were often in singular contrast. Stephen, especially

at the outset, was hot and impetuous; he writes against Pitt's government, in the columns of the Morning Chronicle, with a pen of fire. He will expose to the public the "iniquitous compromise;" he will hold up to execration Pitt, Dundas, and their cabinet; he is sure that the difficulties of England are only a just judgment on national wrong; they are "councils concerted in the cabinet of Heaven to bring forth its long-oppressed, degraded children, with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm." If Lord Liverpool will not support the Registry Bill, he will have no further connection with him, and will throw up his seat. "If Lord Castlereagh fails to redeem this pledge, may God not spare me if I spare the noble Lord and his colleagues." He frets himself into a fever at Wilberforce's overwhelming correspondence; he is vexed when he sees him beset by a multitude of petty distractions, and drawn away from the grand object to which he would have him devote his powers: "Your post-privilege will be the bondage of Africa, and your covers the funeral pile of her new-born hopes."

But all this generous ardour, and these bursts of friendly impatience, hurled against Wilberforce, produced no feeling of irritation in that happy temper. On the contrary, the two characters dovetailed into each other admirably. The leader meets with a smile the blows and buffets of his ardent friend. "Stephen," he says in his diary, "kindly and frankly reproving me." "Go on," he says, "my dear Sir, and welcome. Believe me, I

wish you not to abate anything of the force or frankness of your animadversions. I have not yet had the opportunity of deliberately and fully questioning myself on the charge you have brought, but I mean to enter into as impartial a self-examination as I am able on that head, and then I may perhaps call upon you to justify. For your frankness, however, I feel myself obliged. Openness is the only foundation and preservative of friendship. Let me therefore claim from you at all times your undisguised opinions." Again: "Go on to prick me into constant attention to this subject." He reserves, indeed, to himself that which a leader must reserve, the duty of weighing suggestions and settling plans. "You are several points above me," he says on one occasion. On another, after weighing all the circumstances of the case, he postpones his intention. The attack made by Mr. Stephen on the character of Mr. Pitt he does not accept. But he will not discuss this; they can talk of these points hereafter. At times, when his eager follower blurts out his feelings, and pours shot and shell at Government through an Opposition newspaper, he interposes a witty apologue, with a hint that if we wish to conciliate men in power, grape and shell do not form the best artillery of persuasion. But he has recourse to him, and trusts him, and likes him all the better for his vehemence. In deciding on work, and distributing the parts to those whom he calls his white negroes,* he assigns to Stephen a prominent place. He induces him to write on the Slave Trade in 1802. He looks

* Life, vol. iii. p. 198.

over his pamphlet; approves, and scatters it widely. He sends it to foreign ministers, emperors, and kings. When a thought occurs to him on the subject of the trade of Spain with our West India colonies; on the treaty with Portugal; on the deportation of slaves; on the suspension of the trade, suggested by the West India interest; on the details of the Act of Abolition; on the hopes of influencing the Spanish government; on the restrictions to be laid on negroes in Trinidad and Demerara; he imparts them at once to Mr. Stephen. "To the fertile soil of your mind let me commit the seed of this idea, and let me earnestly conjure you to give it immediate attention." He is the first to report to him the favourable replies, and the concessions of Government; and he marks him out, with ungrudging thankfulness, as "a special instrument in the hands of God in behalf of the negro race."*

On the other hand, Mr. Stephen recognises both the disinterestedness and the long-tried wisdom of his leader. "You will think me half-mad," he says, "and wholly presumptuous. I cannot help it. I must divulge these thoughts to somebody; and who is likely to make more allowance for them than you—you, who are the Moses of these Israelites, though, at the same time, a courtier of Pharoah?" He will do nothing without first taking Wilberforce's opinion. He had once acted on his own judgment, and had erred. He will not do so again. "God forbid I should sin again against a friendship which is the honour and happiness of my life." He feels that he

* Diary, 1810.

is the soul of the movement for the manumission of slaves. He and others may work under him, but not alone. "Should we lose you," he writes to Mr. Wilberforce in 1812, "before the present difficulties of our cause are vanquished, neither my efforts, nor the credit that may be attached to my information, are likely to be of any importance. I should, perhaps, turn my mind and pen to less impracticable objects."

He says (Letter, July 30, 1808) that he has been long convinced, when he looks to the superior wisdom and goodness of his leader, "that in this new system I am a satellite, not a primary planet, placed in it more for your sakes than my own, though for my own too in a subordinate degree."*

In 1800, Mr. Stephen became connected with Wilberforce by a closer tie. Wilberforce's only sister had married a clergyman, Dr. Clarke; and his death had left her a widow. Mr. Stephen had lost his wife soon after his return from the West Indies. In a letter written to Wilberforce in the winter of 1828, he reminds him of his own past sorrows, and of one of those proofs of Wilberforce's goodness which he had long since dismissed from his mind. Mr. Stephen was living in Sloane Street —where his wife had died—under deep dejection, with his bereaved children. "He wished and expected soon to die:" he disliked all society, "except that of my poor orphans and the kind relations who took the charge of them." Then it was that Mr.

* Corresp. vol. ii. p. 137.

Wilberforce sought him out, and tried to draw him from his disconsolate solitude. He pressed him to join his own lively circle. But the sick heart turned away, loathing society. He wished to be left to himself; and, from pride as well as grief, he would have turned his back on Wilberforce's associates, the aristocratic Pittites who then frequented Wilberforce's table. But the kindly Christian would not suffer this.* He came to him, he sat with him, he comforted him, he suggested objects of interest; by degrees he induced him to apply to useful ends his remarkable powers. Mental health returned; and with health, hope. He became the energetic associate of Wilberforce's labours. From contact with him and his friends, his character improved. "Stephen," writes Wilberforce on the eve of his

* I have to thank Sir George Stephen for his letter from Melbourne (June 19, 1865), and for the suggestions he offers. But if he will turn to his father's letter to Mr. Wilberforce, Dec. 3, 1828 (Correspondence, vol. ii. pp. 514, 515), he will find that, in two of the points to which he takes exception, I have been quoting his father's own words.

In remarking that Mr. Wilberforce sought out Mr. Stephen, I was not referring to the commencement of their acquaintance, but to its renewal after Mr. Stephen had become a widower; and there again he will find that I am quoting his father's words in the letter referred to.

With regard to the independence of Mr. Stephen's character, I think that my sketch does justice to it; but the passages I quote from Mr. Stephen's own letters show his respectful esteem for Mr. Wilberforce, and his deference to his opinion on all questions connected with *the anti-slavery cause*. I have introduced that qualification in the sentence to which Sir G. Stephen takes exception.

The difference between Mrs. Stephen and her brother is noticed in my sketch.

marriage, "is an improved and improving character; one of those whom religion has transformed, and in whom it has triumphed by conquering some strong natural infirmities." In this state Mr. Wilberforce's sister found him; and thrown into each other's society, they married in 1800. "You, my kind friend," Stephen writes to Wilberforce, "would not suffer me to forsake you; and the recollection of your tender, generous conduct at that crisis of my affliction, was a tie that bound my heart to you, till I found, two or three years after, another bond of attachment."

The wife, whom Mr. Stephen thus found, possessed a character different in many respects from that of her distinguished brother. To him indeed she owed, under God, her first religious thoughts. He imparted to her, soon after his change of mind, his convictions. Writing to her in May, 1786, he urges her "to watch and pray, and read the Word of God, imploring that true wisdom which may enable you to comprehend and fix it in your heart;" and he tells her, in reference to the imperfections which attach to a Christian in his early course, that the Christian's walk was like one of their Westmoreland evenings, when, though the day had been obscured by clouds and vapour, the evening sun set in a blaze of glory. Afterwards, in the same year, whilst intensely enjoying his Sabbath rest, he poured out his thoughts to her, that she might be a partaker of his joy, and not rest till she shared it. The following year she turned again to him for

help, to resolve the scruples of her sensitive mind; and he then bade her not to debate curiously points of difficulty, or try to confront or argue down her doubts, but to do what duty required, as if no such doubts existed, and be sure in time she would find comfort. In 1793 she again confided to him her anxieties, and received an encouraging answer. After the death of her first husband, her anxieties returned; and it was therefore a happy circumstance which united her to a vigorous and buoyant mind; while to Mr. Stephen her gentleness and humbleness were useful, the clinging plant imparting freshness and beauty to the rough and sinewy stem. Writing to Wilberforce in 1822, on the anniversary of her death, which had happened six years before, Stephen dwells on the radiance of her goodness. "One star differeth from another star in glory; and if love, humility, piety, and patience are paths to the peerage of heaven, her patent was secure. Dignities on earth would have ill suited her taste; but superior rank in heaven, where there is no envy and no pride, will attract only superior love, attest superior excellence, and confer superior joy." She indeed had never through her life escaped entirely from the clouds which beset her morning. She had imparted them to Wilberforce in 1809; and the tone of his letter was, as before, cheering:—"We will confer on these subjects when we meet; meanwhile, be assured that our safety does not vary with our feelings about it. I cannot but think, my dear sister, that you would do well to endeavour to apply

to yourself more confidently the promises of the Gospel." He admits, indeed, that as the Christian advances, he gains "an increasing tenderness of conscience—an increasing sense of the guilt of sin, and of our own sinfulness and weakness;" and these thoughts often produce a contrition so deep as to arise to self-abhorrence; but to such penitents there are rich promises. "May you be enabled to know more of the comfort of Christianity, if it be the will of God, especially since I believe it would be effected by your having more just views of the doctrines of the Gospel."

But though these thoughts troubled the sensitive spirit, the example of her gentle patience produced its effect on the stronger mind. Stephen ascribed to this cause, and to his intimacy with Wilberforce, the growth of his devotional feelings. Writing to Wilberforce in 1808, giving a picture of his inner feelings, he shows through what passages of thought the eager mind had travelled. Once his impetuous philanthropy had chafed at the obstructions which beset it through the selfishness or callousness of men; but this impatient temper had yielded to juster views of the aim and end of life. For if success always attended benevolent labours, he argues, where would be our trial? and this life would yield to the Christian a full reward; but the disappointments, the vexations, the hindrances, which beset him, were of use to chasten and train the spirit for the life to come. The question is not, what we achieve; but from what motives have we acted? For "have we not a gracious Master, who reckons not what we

offer in His service, but what we aim at, and with what spirit and views?"*

In 1817, when, after the loss of his wife, Stephen retired to Bath to recruit his health, he delights to notice the trivial circumstances which ministered to his comfort, or brought to him consolation. The following year, writing just after the death of Sir Samuel Romilly, he shows, in the keen feelings he then manifested, how much of delicate sensibility had grown up and thriven within the robust mind. In 1820, when he retires to the country, he delights to hear of the doings of the poor, carefully visited by his son and daughter: he recounts with lively interest their simple annals. London, indeed, he says, is a place where we may be of most use to others, "but the country is that where I learn what is good for myself. I love the country; I love its natural innocent joys; I love its natural instructive sorrows." The uplands of the Buckinghamshire hills, from which he looked down upon sheltered valleys, out of spreading beech woods that covered the slopes of the hills, these scenes delighted him, alleys opening before him canopied with shade, and lit up at their extremities by gleams of sunshine streaming in over a carpet of grass and moss. But this, he said, was not a mere sentimental delight; for that may be experienced "by abject souls; but blessed charity, and active persevering zeal in our Master's service, these are the great points, and we should choose places

* Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 136.

and everything by them. He too loved the uplands; but He went up to a mountain to pray, and on a mountain He taught His disciples."

In 1822, when seeking for solitude to pass in seclusion the anniversary of his once happy marriage, and of his wife's blessed change, Stephen writes:—"I grow daily more in love with this place. Oh! what a delicious oratory is a beech wood in a calm hot day. Not a leaf stirring; not a sound; a sacred kind of shady light, with here and there a straggling sunbeam, like a gleam of providential direction for the dark concerns of life." He longs to draw Wilberforce to his woodland retreat: he has adjusted his cottage so as to be able to receive the patriarch and his "domestic tail;" he has provided for him a verandah in which he may sit, and a sunny terrace for his autumn walk. Still, while dwelling on these pleasures, he says,—"These things do not make me forget Stoke-Newington churchyard," (in which his wife and sainted mother were laid,) "nor rival in my heart the prospects beyond it." He trusts that his long solitary walks, his happy fancies, his musings on a peaceful Sabbath, his grave but thankful thoughts of loved ones gone, were all training him for a lasting union in an eternal home.

On this buoyant mind, tied down for a part of the year, as a Master in Chancery, to a treadmill-round of drudgery, and finding in its escapes a flight from labour into dreamland, there needed, as he himself was sensible, a sobering and an elevating influence; and this he found in the faithfulness and the

wisdom of his leader. As an example of this, we take a passage from one of Wilberforce's letters. Stephen had been dwelling eloquently on the bounty of Providence, its gracious care and condescending regard. "This letter, to me delightful," says Wilberforce, "because I love Stephen, and it is Stephen all over," reached the statesman at Bath, in the midst of countless engagements—thoughts full, every moment occupied, guests arrived for dinner, and the host not yet dressed. Still he cannot leave his room without sitting down to drop a word of wisdom to his absent friend. "About your last letter I have one word to say. I wish the idea of our Saviour had occurred to you. We are expressly told, 'giving thanks always, &c., through Jesus Christ.' I like to associate Christ with all my religious ideas, as the object of gratitude and love, and God, the supreme God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, also. I must break off; but this is a practical hint, and I could not have been easy without making it." But such hints, instead of chafing the more impetuous Christian, were by him willingly received. No spark of impatience or annoyance came from him. He loved his leader the more for his faithfulness. Thus he ends a letter to him,—"Yours, my dear and faithful friend, the medicine of my life, ever very affectionately," &c. Indeed, it was this affection, more even than the tie of connexion, which bound Stephen to Wilberforce. He loved him with his whole heart. From him he would take anything—hints or counsels, rebuke or correction. He would take no step connected with

the Slave Trade separately from him. His pamphlets, his prepossessions, were all submitted to his overruling judgment. He felt for him what he felt for no other man; and, with a humility remarkable in a person so able and eager, he looked up, from the lower sphere in which he felt himself placed, with an admiring eye, to the brilliant orbit in which Wilberforce's goodness moved. He rejoiced with a disinterested joy in his leader's efforts and success. The pre-eminence of his powers, the favouring circumstances of his position, his parliamentary talents, his social gifts, his affluent fortune and open house, —all these things were appreciated by Stephen, estimated, and rejoiced in. He watched over Wilberforce with a kindly vigilance, much as a father watches over a frail son. He holds him back from overexertion; he entreats him not to attend the House when ailing; he willingly undertakes work for him. His pen, his powers, his time, are always at his service. From this closeness and vigilance of friendship, he becomes one of his wisest advisers; for the circumstances, which escaped the notice of others, were all estimated by him. Hence, when the question comes before the cabinet of friends, whether Wilberforce shall continue to represent the county of York, or retire, his other friends waver and are divided; Stephen is clear and resolute; he will not expose a life, so precious yet so fragile, to the burdens to which it has become unequal. When he finds Wilberforce cast down in spirit, depressed by the feeling of bodily infirmity, and reflecting

how little he can accomplish of the great work which is to be done, none is more forward to cheer him.

And this true friendship Wilberforce requites with grateful regard. He is never weary of dwelling on Stephen's affection. He writes to him,—"I am ever affectionately, and never so affectionately as when my mind is in its best state, yours." "I feel all your kindness to me, though I say little about it. I am, however, praying God to bless and preserve you." "You are, and ever have been, kind to me beyond a brother's kindness, and I think of it often with wonder, as well as with humiliation and gratitude. Surely no man ever had so many friends, and you and my sister are amongst the very first." He speaks of his "tender solicitude. I thought of it one night when I lay awake." In 1819 he writes, on the anniversary of his sister's death,—"I cannot suffer this memorable day to pass over without assuring you that, while I call to mind her whom we lost three years ago, I am still more forcibly impressed with a sense of that long and uniform course of unvaried kindness, which my dear sister, as well as her brother, have uniformly experienced at your hands. Hand is a very common phrase, and very inadequate to express my meaning; for I am sure your friendship has appeared in heart, head, feet, arms, hands, whenever they could contribute to our benefit and comfort."

This regard between the two friends, long united in various enterprises, was so close, that Wilberforce

could not bear to think of its severance. "I told Perceval frankly," he writes in his diary, "that my strongest reason for immediate action was, that if a dissolution should take place this year, and we should lose Stephen, the loss would be irremediable." His regard for him grows with years. He opens to him his confidential thoughts. When there is a perplexing difficulty, he has recourse to him as the first of his advisers. When he is hunted out of his house by packs of visitors, he finds a retreat in Stephen's chambers. He enters into his friend's recreations as well as his business. He wants to know what he is doing in the recess. He would like to wander with him in his favourite woods in Bucks. He rates him for working too hard; urges him to take more exercise; writes from Marden Park, and tries to tempt him to taste the pure air of the Downs; sympathises with his pleasures: "I can quite rejoice in the idea of your stalking along your hills, and spouting, or musing, or talking to yourself." He wants him to enjoy whatever he enjoys. "When I get among the rocks, and scale the mountains of Westmoreland, I quite long to have you with me." If a shade crosses his countenance, he notices it. "You appeared to me to look unhappy last night, as if something was giving you pain, either in body or mind. It will be a pleasure to me to hear that this was not so; or if it was, and I can help to remove it, let me try."

In this unrestrained intimacy the two friends continued till near the end; and just before the Moses

of the mission (as Stephen called his leader) mounted for the last time his Pisgah to see the long promised land of freedom unrolled at his feet, Stephen reached the borders of the dark river, and crossed it in peace.

CHAPTER X.

REV. THOMAS GISBORNE.

One friend whose name we find frequently occurring in the deliberations of the Cabinet Council, much consulted and helpful, was Thomas Babington. But his acquaintance Wilberforce owed to another friend, who, though he moved in a separate line, and more rarely crossed Wilberforce's public path, helped him notwithstanding, in his public life, by suggestion as well as by sympathy, and always had a retreat ready for him where he might enjoy repose.

Of him we must now speak; for though Thomas Gisborne can hardly be placed in Wilberforce's working cabinet, nor was he actively engaged in the administration of public affairs, he took a warm interest in two of the great objects to which Wilberforce devoted his life; and much of Wilberforce's leisure, till his marriage, was spent in the Forest, in which Mr. Gisborne lived. Of that forest home we have a pleasant picture in the outset of Wilberforce's life, from a youthful pen; and we find a short description of it from his own pen towards the close of his course. Writing from Yoxall Lodge to Mr.

Stephen in 1827, just after he had heard of the serious illness of Canning, Wilberforce says,—"Well as I thought I knew this place, and much as I had admired it, I never saw its riches displayed in such overflowing profusion. I never was here before till late in the year, or saw the first foliage of the magnificent oak contrast with the dark holly, the flowering gorse, and the horse chestnut." Wilberforce's visits to the retreat of Needwood Forest had chiefly taken place in autumn; and it was there, in the autumn of 1790, that he had passed several weeks, along with Mr. Babington, working hard (as he says, like negroes) at the Evidence collected by the Privy Council (a great folio volume), and 1400 pages of Evidence collected by the Committee of the House of Commons. Here he and Mr. Babington worked from nine to ten hours a day, interrupted only by a hasty dinner, and spending half an hour with the family in the evening. Here they collected the facts which were to supply the gunpowder and shot for the artillery of their long and hard campaign. Here he could pass his time in study, and enjoy a stroll amongst the glades of the forest, and carol there his songs of praise. "Often have I heard," says Mr. Gisborne, "the melodious tones of his voice amongst the trees, from the distance of full half a mile." The description of the place is thus given by a youthful guest:—"In the most retired and woody part of Needwood Forest stands the house, which is large and comfortable. The views from it are beautiful, and the whole scene gives an assurance of enjoying perfect quietness; for there is nothing near us

that bears the form of life, except abundance of deer." The party then consisted of "Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne (she a sister of Mr. Babington), and their children; Mr. and Mrs. Babington, with two young ones; a younger Mr. Babington, and ourselves. Every corner of this house is crammed full of books, and people are free to read, or go out or come in, and do exactly as they like." Thus on their arrival they find the two ladies knitting and spinning, and Mr. Gisborne reading to them; and the two Mr. Babingtons performing their usual task of digging in the garden. After the accession of Mr. Wilberforce, she gives another vignette picture of a forenoon at the Lodge—Mr. Babington, jun., reading to Mr. Wilberforce in one corner of the room; Mr. Gisborne correcting the proof-sheets of his book in another; and the three ladies discussing in the middle of it. Over this large establishment Mr. Gisborne presided. Tender as a father and husband, delightful as a host, he ruled his household with a gentle hand. His partner, brought up out of the world, and knowing nothing of its ways, adopted without a question the fashions which her husband prescribed. His opinion was to her admiring mind an authority absolute and without appeal; and when her friends objected to her simple dress and early hours as barbarous and not fit for the world, she assured them that she was perfectly happy, and never wished to know the world except by report.

The host, who thus made his home in Needwood Forest, had inherited a large estate in the counties

of Derby and Stafford, which present to the traveller many interesting objects. His demesne bordered on the Forest of Needwood; and its unenclosed woods of oak and holly, with their glades and dells, diversified the more cultivated landscape of English husbandry. Possessed of this position, and inheriting a large estate, Mr. Gisborne might have aspired (as his eldest son afterwards did) to represent the county of Derby in Parliament. While his estate recommended him to the freeholders, his opinions were in unison with theirs. Turning their eyes therefore to him, they asked to be allowed to choose him as their county member. But for such a life (even had his tastes not turned in another direction) Mr. Gisborne had an insuperable repugnance. He was by nature shy, and of a disposition gentle and retiring. Early in life his religious sentiments had become fixed, and his principles as well as his tastes now led him to a different vocation. To the ministry of the Church of England he gave himself; and in her service he became, both as a preacher and a writer, of no inconsiderable repute. We should find it difficult to point out an opinion more just and discriminating than Henry Thornton's; and this was the judgment which he passed on Mr. Gisborne. Speaking in 1802 of his visit to Yoxall Lodge, for the purpose of improving his friendship, he writes:—"Great would have been the pleasure of having you with me, for Gisborne is the man of almost all others whom I could wish you implicitly to follow. The longer we live, the more shall we discover the value

of his sobriety, candour, openness, and kindness." High praise from so accurate and impartial a judge. Gisborne wrote a treatise on the duties of men and women, which was much esteemed. He published a work on moral philosophy, in order to correct the low views of Paley. His sermons were valued, and the appearance of a new volume of these was hailed by Hannah More, and other persons of taste, as a spiritual and intellectual treat. It is true that these works do not now appear on our shelves, except in older libraries, collected by men of his own generation; but this only proves, what it is well for all to learn, how short is the life even of the most popular writings. About this, however, Mr. Gisborne in no way concerned himself. He had not written with a view to money or fame. He wished to touch the hearts and move the consciences of living men. But these works were only the *recreations* of his leisure. The *business* of his life was different. He had given himself to the ministry of his Church; and his Church did not withhold from him some of her rewards. She left him, indeed, for some time unnoticed; for in these days notice did not always attend desert. Then, more than now, political interest secured promotion; and the worldly-minded and sharp-witted mounted the ladder of preferment with quick steps, while the humble and hard-working remained below. The Church of England is apt to treat her children like a Spartan mother—give them black broth and buffets for their daily fare. When she hires them, she does not bribe them with rewards, and offers them little prospect either of wealth or fame.

Mr. Gisborne, indeed, might have counted on some of its prizes, for his social position was high. But it was only after many years of service that he was rewarded with a canonry in Durham. As, however, promotion was noways his object, he was not discomposed. He took life cheerfully, and bore himself with thankful energy. His desire was to do good—to write the lessons of truth in the hearts of a simple people. In this labour he was successful; and he did his work not so much from a sentiment of duty (that stage of feeling had long passed), but from pleasure. His work was his delight. He loved to pass in it every day and all the day. He went to it with a will, and he worked in it heart and soul. Happily married, he had found a partner of congenial tastes; and the delight of both was to make others as happy as themselves. Wherever there was trouble or sickness, there they were to be found; and in the forest as in the city, there is no want of sorrow. There was not a cottage in the neighbouring hamlet, nor a hut within the glades or on the edge of the forest, which was not known to them. They were familiar with its interior; they visited its inmates; they were interested in their concerns. If any among these families were sick, they were at hand to look after them. If any were sad, they were there to comfort them. They helped them through difficulties; they lifted them over many a stiff stile in the way. They assisted to push their children into life. They smoothed the decline of the aged, and they cheered the bed of death. They were the general advisers and referees

of the vicinage. Wherever that tall figure, with her straw hat and pink ribbons and white gown, appeared, a sunbeam fell on the cottage door. The pastor, he was the universal friend. They came to him to settle their quarrels. In a contest of rights, they chose him as judge, and from his judgment no one ever thought of appealing; for who would question the opinion of one so learned, and who would refuse the law from a lawgiver who wrote his code in their hearts?

Without a touch of formality or condescension he moved amongst them. His knock at the cottage door was a pleasant signal, and he dropped into the seat which the good wife dusted and set for him, with the freedom of a friend. After the curtsey and the smile of welcome, he listened to their histories; simple annals, but the annals of life; the same in all ranks — family troubles, trials of temper, daily crosses, anxieties, bereavements, the bad temper of neighbours, the struggles with our own bad temper. He heard all, not as if he only endured the tale, but because he liked it, and was interested in it. These stories were his opportunities for lessons which he wished to teach; the incidents of life were the pegs on which he hung his instructions; for he passed, by a natural transition, from the trials of life to its comforts, its discipline, and aim; and these lessons dropped from him naturally, not as set sermons or grave saws, but as hints which he offered to them with simplicity, from his own experience. He had no need to say much; for there was in himself, in

his life and looks, that which spoke better than words. They saw how he took his own trials; how he met crosses, and turned them to profit, and threw on the edges of the darkest cloud the silver lining of Divine light. He could tell them of a peace independent of circumstances; and, having tried it, he could commend it. He was happy—that they saw; he wanted them to be happy—of that they had no doubt: how they might be happy, he was there to tell them; and they became anxious to learn the lesson, for it was worth while to follow one who was himself so good and cheerful. As to his learning, they knew little and cared less. They might be pleased at times to think that their parson was a scholar and a grand preacher; but if he had been Porson, or Robert Hall, it would have made no difference in their estimate. It was as a parson they knew him. He came to their cottages, and sat by their firesides, and understood their ways, and felt for their troubles; and never stood aloof, or looked down coldly, or treated them, as if he stooped from a height, with a gracious but grating condescension. He was one of themselves—walked with them the same round of duty on the same road, only a step in advance, turning back and offering them his hand to help them over difficulties. So they trusted him, and liked him, not for what he gave (money cannot buy love), but for his fellow-feeling with them, sympathy more precious than gold. Thus he spent his life in the Forest, and had no mind to leave it; the work, he had himself chosen, was that which he wrought

willingly to the end. Not indeed that Mr. Gisborne lived an illiterate or stagnant life; far from it, he had many pursuits. Of literature he was fond. In composition, skilful. In his speaking, when he was induced to speak, singularly attractive. His air and manners that of the courteous gentleman. He observed natural history with a curious eye; and there was not a flower within the circuit of the Forest, or an insect which flitted its brief life on the wing, that he had not noticed and studied; and nature, a bountiful mistress, threw open to him her cabinet of marvels. With these he enriched his thoughts. His library was like his mind, full of curious things stored up —birds stuffed, and birds alive, creatures he had caught and tamed, for all living creatures loved the gentle being.

Probably, had he been left to himself, he would have passed his life without interruption within his forest parish. But he was connected with Mr. Babington by marriage, and there were many interests which connected him with Wilberforce. The same college at Cambridge (St. John's) had received them both. Wilberforce had entered the college at the age of seventeen, in the year 1776; and as he was rich, he soon attracted to himself the idle lads who in most colleges abound. After the first year he shook off these associates, and he then entered a more decorous circle. In that circle he found Thomas Gisborne, who was then reading for the mathematical distinctions which he afterwards gained; for in 1780 he went out as sixth wrangler. As Wilber-

force was both amiable and hospitable, fond of talk, and quick at repartee, and could entertain his guests both with good fare and drollery, he was universally popular. "There was no one," says Mr. Gisborne, "at all like him for powers of entertainment. My rooms and his were back to back; and often, when I was raking out my fire at ten o'clock, I heard his melodious voice calling aloud to me to come and sit with him before I went to bed. It was a dangerous thing to do, for his amusing conversation was sure to keep me up so late that I was behindhand the next morning." After their college life, the two men, as often happens, drifted apart. But though Mr. Gisborne's course was that of a retired pastor, far from London and public affairs, there was a subject in which he took intense interest—the guilt of the Slave Trade. This question touched his heart and roused his conscience. Great, therefore, was his delight when he found it brought forward, in 1789, with singular eloquence by his old college friend. Wilberforce's speech on that occasion had called forth tributes of admiration; generous praise from Pitt and Fox, and a rare encomium from Edmund Burke. Mr. Gisborne sent him his congratulations, and offered to help him. He promised to employ "two or three hours a day in the service of the Africans and yourself." Soon after this he welcomed him to his own home, where the statesman passed weeks of study in examining evidence; and after this time, till his marriage, Yoxall Lodge was one of his favourite retreats, where he could enjoy leisure and the ease of an inti-

mate friendship. There he wrote great part of his work on Practical Christianity. From this time letters of entire confidence passed between the two friends. Mr. Gisborne writes,—"I have been as busy in town as a member of Parliament preparing himself to maintain the abolition of the Slave Trade, and no doubt much more usefully employed. I shall expect to read in the newspapers of your being carbonadoed by West India planters, barbecued by African merchants, and eaten by Guinea captains; but do not be daunted, for——I will write your epitaph."

In 1792, Wilberforce sends to him the result of the anti-Slavery debate; and in answer to his appeal for "precise directions" as to getting up a county meeting, "for the success of each branch of the plan is matured, and you can give me your instructions in less than five minutes," he explains to him his views. In the following year we find them in correspondence on the same subject. Wilberforce confides to him his difficulties when he is struggling to open India to missions; and Gisborne cheers and encourages him. In the letters which pass between them, however hurried, the pen of Wilberforce touches always the great theme of Christian hope, whether he speaks* of his benevolent wish to make this subject known to others, or whether he is dwelling with sorrowful regret on Pitt's untimely end.† Sometimes, indeed, applying the charm which he had exercised at Cambridge, he

* Life, vol. i. p. 338. † Corresp. vol. ii. p. 70.

drew the pastor from his forest-home into the busy circle which met at Broomfield and Kensington Gore. But though, whenever Gisborne appeared, he was cordially welcomed, and became for a time a partner in the councils of the cabinet, he was a silent and somewhat embarrassed spectator of modes of life from which he shrank with alarm. It was like taking a bird from the forest, which had lived with its mate and had sung beside her nest, and hurling it into the glare of day by the sea shore, among clouds of sea-fowl, that whitened the face of the cliff and filled the air with their shrill screams. To the pastor, torn from his daily rounds, nothing seemed more perplexing than these eddies of business, these movements of eager men engaged in pushing forward their benevolent schemes in the face of opposition, now driven back by adverse forces, now swept out of their course by storms, yet braced by resistance, and still advancing, their wits sharpened, the ear and eye awake, pressing forward to success. Stranger, perhaps, it seemed to Gisborne, after he had watched a single day of his friend's perturbed life, to observe him, though surrounded by visitors, driven hither and thither by conflicting claims, and forcing his way, from dawn to dusk, through an amount of work which it made a plain man giddy to witness; yet all the while cheerful, and preserving, in the midst of excitement, a spirit as calm as if he roamed fancy-free through woodland glades. Then to notice that, when the Sabbath came, and brought its welcome rest, all business was laid aside, and the unburdened

spirit, neither chafed nor worn, rose and carolled, blithe as a lark, its song of joy under a cloudless sky. Moreover, he perceived that, after the bustling morning, when from swarms of claimants the statesman at last shook himself free, and snatched a walk from Kensington Gore to Hyde Park Corner, during this interval between the crowd he had left and the bustle into which he was about to be plunged, his voice might be caught repeating to himself some verses of a favourite hymn, a poem of Cowper, or one of David's Psalms. Thus he realised, long before, the picture drawn by our Christian poet:—

> "There are in this loud stunning tide
> Of human care and crime,
> With whom the melodies abide
> Of the everlasting chime:
> Who carry music in their heart
> Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
> Plying their daily task with busier feet,
> Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

But Gisborne, unaccustomed to such a life, and unable to accommodate himself to it, liked it not; and he marvelled that his friend's temper, crossed often in his best schemes by selfish interests, should remain as calm as his own spirit, which was nursed in retirement, and refreshed by the sights of nature. Yet it fell out that, when the statesman's holiday came at last, and the friends met again in the country, the same theme had equal interest for both. They could tell of the same experience, and point to the same comfort. When the pastor led the statesman to his woodland walks, among oak and holly, and drew him to the cottages of the

Forest, to which his own footsteps so often turned, and told him of the peasants' annals, he found an eager listener, and poured his story into a willing ear. Further, when he unfolded to him the wonders of nature, the habits of plants, the life of birds and insects, none was more delighted to hear, nor did any one join more heartily in notes of wonder and praise. Thus the two friends walked in company; starting together at College, they went on together through life, and carried to old age their uninterrupted regard. Their course, indeed, was distinct; one on the highway of public life, the other in rural bye-ways; yet both walked, with buoyant steps, under the same sunlight. In repute they differed; the name of the one, known to the wide world, has left a mark on the world's annals; the other passed his life unnoticed, but he too left traces, where he sought to leave them, in peasants' hearts, the souls which he had comforted or reclaimed; and he, in the ingathering of the harvest, will be owned a faithful husbandman.

CHAPTER XI.

THOMAS BABINGTON, ESQ., M.P. FOR LEICESTER.

One of the friends with whom Wilberforce was from an early period of his public life connected, and with whom he continued in close communication to the last, was Thomas Babington. Babington's character was appreciated by him; and his judgment was valued so much, that there was hardly a step in his public life which Wilberforce took without consulting this judicious friend.

Thomas Babington was of an ancient Anglo-Saxon family, long settled in Northumberland under their old name of Bavington, at their seat, Bavington Castle, which lies to the north of Hexham. In the Scottish wars of Edward the First they rose to eminence, and became during that reign governors of Nottingham Castle, and proprietors of large estates in the county of Nottingham. The head of the family added to his distinctions by his deeds at the battle of Agincourt, and brought back wealth and fame from the wars of France. Successful in love as in war, he wedded the heiress of Dethwick in the county of Derby, and there he fixed henceforth the chief seat of the family. In the hall of

Dethwick was hung the armour which he had worn on the field of Agincourt, and there for a long time the trophy remained. His son took an active part in the wars of York and Lancaster; and espousing eagerly the side of the York faction, he fell in their ranks on the field of Bosworth, having received his death blow from the lance of Sir James Blount. In the reign of Elizabeth, the head of the family, Anthony Babington, acquired an unenviable notoriety, as the leader of the Roman Catholic conspiracy against the life of Elizabeth; their further object being to release Queen Mary, and place her on the throne. This transaction, which occurred in 1586, and brought Babington's head to the block, was owing, not to the views of his family, but to the peculiar circumstances which had befallen the unfortunate proprietor. Left a child of seven at his father's death, he passed, through his mother's second marriage with a bigoted Papist, into the hands of the Jesuits. Perverted by them, he became their pliant instrument, and fell, at the age of twenty-four, the victim as well as the accomplice of their schemes. But, prior to this catastrophe, events had occurred (in 1544) which had an important influence on the other branch of the family with which our narrative connects us.

In the palmy days of the Romish faith, the Knights Templars had settled themselves in the fertile lands of the county of Leicester. Here their chief seat was Rothley Temple, from which they extended their possessions over a considerable district, which now comprises several parishes, and which remains

to our day a Peculiar under the name of the Soke of Rothley. Of the Knights Templars of St. John, the Master, at the time when Henry VIII. swept away monastic foundations, was one of the Babington family. Humphrey, a younger brother, obtained, from the Grand Master and Chapter, Rothley Temple, on a lease of lives, and the lease expiring in 1567, was changed into a fee simple by Sir Ambrose Cave; from that epoch one Babington after another succeeded to the estate, which supplied a moderate but respectable income. At Rothley Temple, on the 18th December, 1758, Thomas Babington, of whom we are to speak, was born; and there, in the same room, after a life of 79 years, he died. There he was brought up as a boy; and, losing his father when he had reached the age of 17, he went to St. John's, Cambridge, in the autumn of 1775. In 1779 he graduated as twelfth Wrangler. His principles were early fixed, and he found in the College a congenial friend in Thomas Gisborne; the friendship then formed lasted for the rest of their lives, and was cemented by the marriage of Mr. Gisborne with Babington's only sister. In 1787, heir of an independent fortune, Thomas Babington resolved to travel, and in company with Aulay Macaulay, he determined to visit Scotland. In those days, travelling was not easy, and to the north of the Tweed roads were bad and inns were few. Babington made his tour in a curricle drawn by his own horses. In parts of the Highlands, then unfrequented, before Sir Walter Scott had drawn, by his poems, crowds of tourists to the north,

the parish minister was often the only person who could offer hospitality to the passing stranger; and the manse presented to the tourist a welcome shelter. We can, in later days, remember how often the hospitable minister, with large heart but small means, was called on to entertain, and nearly was ruined by, hungry tourists. But in those early days the inconvenience was little felt: tourists were few, and for the shelter afforded them they gave what, in days of dear postage and rare newspapers, was acceptable, the last news of the outer world. In one of these Scotch manses the Rev. John Macaulay was the minister, and in it the young and pleasant Englishman was hospitably entertained. Among the rosy daughters of the manse, one of the Highland lassies attracted the Englishman's notice; and, after a few months' acquaintance and courtship, the English stranger won her hand. From that connexion arose the alliance between the families of Babington and Macaulay, of which, and the name which marked it (Thomas Babington), Lord Macaulay was specially proud.

Soon after his marriage, Thomas Babington settled on his hereditary estate, and occupied his time with agricultural improvements, in which he acquired great experience; he devoted himself to literature, and became a various reader; and he consulted the good of his poorer neighbours, for he was an earnest Christian philanthropist. No case of distress happened in his vicinage that did not find him prompt to help. He taught, and read, and prayed with the poor; in the Sunday School of his parish he con-

tinued through life to teach, and the old man, with the infirmities of age creeping on him, was diligent in the work which he had begun in his prime. In 1800, Babington was returned member for the borough of Leicester, a borough even in those days notorious for expensive contests. Mr. Henry Thornton writes, —"Babington stands for Leicester, and they bid us hope that he will carry it against a treating, bribing, and extravagant sort of antagonist." Babington conducted his election on principles which are not as popular as they are pure. To one class of electors they are odious, doubtful with others. Yet, notwithstanding this abstemious virtue, though almost always opposed, and annoyed by fierce contests, Babington represented Leicester for twenty years, and at length retired only because his success would have been bought by the sacrifice of his faithful colleague.

With Mr. Wilberforce he had had at college a slight aquaintance. But Mr. Wilberforce's set and his habits were distasteful to the more scrupulous disposition of Babington, and during his college life he avoided Wilberforce's society. But when the statesman's views had changed, and he had renewed his intimacy with Mr. Gisborne, it was natural that he should speedily include Mr. Babington; and in 1790, we find the two united in a tour, and Wilberforce was struck, thus early, with the simplicity and purity of Babington's character. From this time their friendship began. It was strengthened during the same autumn at Yoxall Lodge, where they commenced their intimate alliance, engaging in the

work of condensing the Parliamentary evidence, which was so helpful to the Abolition cause.

When Wilberforce had thus tested the value of Mr. Babington's help, and had found out his judgment, his energy, and the steadiness of his unostentatious application, he regarded him henceforth as one of the most valued of his Philanthropic Cabinet. Babington was always ready to take up any work, however hard, which could serve the public cause. In the spring of 1791 Wilberforce applied to him for help. "Without shame or remorse, I call on you to assist us in epitomizing the evidence, of which a number or two will be dispatched to you to-night. You may be allowed a little more discretion than Dickson, but you must be very reserved in the exercise of it: the sooner you can return your book the better: in about a month, I conceive, I shall make my motion. Let me know how your engagements stand, that I may contrive to avail myself of your help, whether in town or country." The same year, at the conclusion of the session, when Wilberforce was starting for Bath, where he leased a country-house along with Henry Thornton, he writes to Babington with the pleasant ease of an established friendship:—"I am afraid that even the mildness * of your nature has been sharpened to exacerbation (as Dr. Johnson would term it) by my obstinate silence; but if so, it is rather a proof of your unreasonableness than of my criminality. This

* It is worthy of remark, that Mr. Babington's natural temper was passionate; but gradually, through a higher principle, this fault (as Wilberforce's remarks show) was subdued.

is the true mode of defence, to shift the war, like Tippoo, into the quarters of the enemy. However, behold me now upon my road to Bath, with Henry Thornton for my agreeable companion. We are snug and comfortable; but we would willingly increase our duet to a trio to admit your Honour." This letter, written in June, was followed by others from London in July; and in August Wilberforce settled himself at Rothley Temple, that place and Yoxall Lodge being henceforth, till his marriage, the constant resort of his leisure. Here the two friends studied together; one of their subjects being English history, which they read diligently, even in their walks, Babington reading aloud, whilst his mercurial guest was supposed to guide his steps. In one respect Babington supplied a moral guidance to his friend, for the sight of his balanced mind, calm judgment, and heavenly temper, in the midst of earthly comforts, and with their natural temptations, had a great effect in influencing Wilberforce. He recurs to this frequently in his diary, and shows how much he was impressed.

In the following years, when the Abolition cause had passed from parliamentary discussion into the popular arena, and when public opinion was to be roused and petitions stirred up, Babington in Leicestershire, and Gisborne in Staffordshire, received their instructions, as to their course, from Wilberforce. "Your meeting in Leicester," he writes to Babington, "should be called immediately, that other towns might be more easily induced to walk in the desired road, when it shall be plainly

chalked out and well trodden before them." When the news of the disorders of St. Domingo frightened the ministerialists, and threatened to arrest the progress of Abolition, Babington wrote to cheer his friend. "Do not be afraid," Wilberforce answers, "lest I should give ground; I hope, through God's blessing, to be enabled to press forward, and never to abandon my pursuit or relax in it, till (a supposition hardly conceivable) it shall become right so to do. This is a matter wherein all personal, much more all ministerial, attachments must be as dust in the balance. Meanwhile exert yourself in the country with renewed vigour. I should be glad to have some petitions, if possible, even before my notice."

Again, in 1799 we find Wilberforce corresponding with Babington on other public questions; as on the Legislative Union with Ireland; and after 1800, they were placed in personal communication on public affairs, as both were now in Parliament. They were not, indeed, precisely of the same shade in politics—Babington somewhat more disposed to Liberal views, Wilberforce a follower of Pitt; but in dislike of anti-Jacobin doctrines both agreed, and on the great questions of public philanthropy they worked together, refusing to bend to the convenience or interests of party. In 1803, when Babington was passing the winter in Madeira, Wilberforce writes to him in confidence, to complain of the delay, the weakness, and the culpable irresolution of Addington. In 1808, he pours into his ear his complaints of the unjust proceedings of Lord Castlereagh in destroying the schools of

Ceylon; and still, with undiminished cordiality, in 1814 he lays before him the considerations which induce him to postpone the Register Bill, in order that a general and combined effort might be made to unite the Allied Powers in a convention for the abolition of the slave trade.

But while Wilberforce thus asked and took his friend's advice upon public questions, he sought his judgment no less on questions which concerned his own position. As early as 1803, Babington, with the anxious eye of friendship, had become alarmed at the effect which the pressure of so much work was producing on Wilberforce's feeble constitution. He then urged him to consider the duty of retiring from Parliament; and Wilberforce's answer shows the confidence with which he turned to his friend's opinion. When the question of his retirement from the representation of Yorkshire was to be discussed, Babington's was the judgment to which Wilberforce anxiously submitted it. And his final decision, in 1811, when he determined to give up the great county, was fully discussed with his friend. To him also he opens, along with the various reasons, the more secret feelings which swayed him. "I need not, I trust, assure you that I endeavour to bear in mind the conclusion of Milton's beautiful sonnet,

"They also serve who only stand and wait:"

but I am well aware it is not to stand still, or even wait, to be employed in writing a religious work, or to be educating six children. They are both employments which may well claim the utmost powers

of a man of far greater abilities than myself. Still, tell me fairly what you judge best for me." And then he puts before him various considerations,—on the one side, his remaining in the House, and so being prevented from writing or attending to his family, and the possibility that, if out of Parliament, he might advise or write on public questions with greater freedom. On the other side, he represents his long life in Parliament of thirty-one years, his habits formed to it, his influence, and its usefulness in helping forward the causes which both had at heart. But he must decide at once, "therefore write to me immediately."

During the long public life of both the friends, their cordiality was undisturbed even by a passing cloud. During their vacations, they could not, indeed, meet and live together as they had done in their bachelor days: each was a patriarch with a family; and when Wilberforce moved, it was to plant his domestic tail in some spacious house on the coast, or in the retirement of the country; but from time to time, during the recess, they greeted each other with friendly letters, and these contained always the same kindly thoughts, of which, on Wilberforce's side, we give one specimen:—"We spent two months in quiet at Hurstmonceaux, and I assure you, my dear Tom, I can truly say that you were remembered, not merely from the thoughts and feelings which are always expended on those we love, and for whose well-doing we are interested, but from my bearing in mind your good advice concerning the management of my children." He then details his daily habits; his reading with his children,

developing their minds and encouraging their remarks; and he concludes,—"I enter into all your domestic cares and joys. May God continue you His best blessings."

It supplies, indeed, another proof of Wilberforce's sound judgment, that he sought Babington's advice on the subject of his children's education. For this was a matter which Mr. Babington had studied carefully; on which he had written a work of value; and he had tested the soundness of his theories in the management of his own children. His family was large, but it was singularly united. No doubt, the habits of his children were carefully watched by him, and they were debarred from some of those amusements which we reckon among the pleasures of youth. But these restraints found their compensation in the cheerfulness which, flowing from the heads of the family, infected, by a wholesome contagion, the whole circle—not, indeed, that Mr. Babington was, by nature, of a playful temperament; a gentle gravity was his characteristic; but, though his spirits were not buoyant like those of Wilberforce, nor had he that buoyant gaiety which is well suited to children, he was careful to provide for their amusement, and ingenious in devices to promote it; manly sports, adventurous feats, and active exercises were encouraged, and within the limits of morality and prudence they were taught to indulge in these. The hunting field he did not allow them to enter, as in those days the society of the hunting field was coarse, and the tone of morals low: but all nervous timidity was checked; and as

one of his children had in childhood received a fright from a gun, he took pains to conquer the feeling, for he would have them grow up energetic and bold, fearing nothing but sin. So, bathing in the river and the sea; swimming fearlessly; accompanying their father to the woods, to wield the pruning knife or the axe; long walks and excursions in the neighbourhood, to the ruins of Bradgate Park, or more distant scenes; with these pursuits he delighted their early years. No doubt, in regard to society, he took a strict, and, as it would be called, a peculiar line. He himself, from his public position, engaged in politics and Parliamentary affairs, of necessity met men of all sorts, characters, and opinions. But for his hours of social freedom he selected carefully his associates; and for himself, as for his children, he chose them among persons of piety. His views on that point are stated in a letter written to one of his sons, about the year 1810, published in the Christian Observer of May, 1817.

His work on Christian Education* is not, indeed, one of systematic theory, nor did it exhaust a subject which is large. But it is interesting, inasmuch as it gives us the maxims he had followed in the up-bringing of his own children, and which had stood the test of his own experience. It may be read by parents with advantage at the present day. His determination to treat religion as you treat other branches of study, and to endeavour to implant it in the child as you implant other habits, only more earnestly from its superior import-

* Christian Education, Hatchard, 1841, 9th edition.

ance, and more watchfully, is valuable; and it presents a wholesome barrier both against formalism and fanaticism. His remarks are full of a masculine common-sense, admitting, with Christian reverence, how absolutely all religious teaching depends for its efficacy on the Divine aid, yet pointing out how much room there is for human care, and how little there is in Scripture to justify that austere formalism which presents to the young mind a forbidding uniformity; how little there is in Christianity of stern dogma, rising up, like a wall, to heaven, to shut out the gentle presence of a loving Friend. We are taught, in this practical guide, to avoid, on one side, those perfunctory precepts which soon become repulsive; and on the other side, never to twist awry the doctrine of Divine assistance, so as to supersede the duty of parental training. But not less are we warned, in our discharge of parental duty, and our attention to religious teaching, to beware, above all things, of the forcing system; through which parents draw up the tender plant into an exotic life, producing sickly leaves and unhealthy blossoms, while life has little root in the soil; thus, by stimulants easily applied, leading the child to affect what he does not feel, or to go beyond his real feelings by modes of speech or of observance which exceed his convictions. These cautions are marked by wisdom, and should be studied with care. The system also of accustoming children to think and reason for themselves, of employing the lessons of the schoolroom to fix the habits for life; teaching obedience, regularity, and

patience; these maxims, as also provision against the risks encountered by children from the words and ways of servants, are clearly laid down in this useful treatise. The result of these rules, practically applied, was a family well brought up, who illustrated in their lives the precepts and example of their father. Disasters descended on some of them, which tried the parents' heart, and darkened the family fortunes; yet have the children of the house been prompt to acknowledge that what was true, good, and effective in their after life, was due to their early training in this well-ordered home.

In the House of Commons Mr. Babington was not distinguished, as men reckon distinction. He was no speaker, and that instrument of power in a popular assembly was wanting to him. When he was added to the House of Commons, Henry Thornton wrote that it was the addition of a unit to a party already insignificant; but this disparagement of the independent party, to which he himself belonged, was a mistake which has been well exposed by Dr. Chalmers. A party may be small, but the influence of a few independent minds, acting together on defined principles, is not to be measured by figures of arithmetic. Open the dispatches of Sir Arthur Wellesley as Irish Secretary, and see how the line of ministerial action in his day was influenced by dread of that small party; bear in mind its effects on Pitt during the French war, its decisive efficacy in the case of Lord Melville; observe its power in the case of the Duke of York; remember the appeals made to that

party by Pitt and the Whigs, by Percival and Canning; and let us learn, that influence, like the atmosphere, has a positive, though impalpable, power. You cannot weigh it, or measure it; but it is vital; it destroys, or it revives."

One of Babington's special services was to attack the Lottery, and he never ceased the attack till the measure was abandoned. As he did not secure influence by his words, he wrought by service. He was assiduous on Committees, a great branch of Parliamentary labour, and he never left the House till it rose. If, on any difficult question of politics, any one wanted either a clear statement of the case, or a sound judgment on it, no man was more reliable than Babington. Thus, when Henry Thornton (one of the clearest minds of his day) was laid aside by illness, and desired to gather up a knowledge of what had passed in the House in his absence (the discussions turned at the moment on the complicated questions of the Orders in Council and the American War), he resorted to Babington. A two hours' conference with him placed him in possession of the debate. So he writes, January, 1812:—"Babington came to me for two hours, and filled me with more important and accurate and true knowledge, on some of the greatest subjects which can occupy the mind, than I could have gained in twice the time from the oratory of Stephen, or the fluency and digressions of Wilberforce. . . . He is more and more respected in Parliament." He occupied, during his public life, the house in Downing Street which afterwards held the Foreign Office, and in that, with a liberal

hospitality, he received his friends, and a daily dinner was prepared before the House met, that his friends might drop in and dine. From this practice one incident arose which deserves a record. On the day on which Mr. Percival was shot, Mr. Wilberforce, along with other Parliamentary friends, had met in Babington's house, and from the windows in Downing Street Mr. Wilberforce was looking when the Premier passed down the street on his way to the House of Commons. The genial philanthropist broke out, as he observed him, into an affectionate eulogy on his worth and principles. Mr. Babington was absent; he had been that day in close attendance on a Parliamentary Committee till the House met; and on leaving his Committee, as he passed through the lobby, he became acquainted with the crime which had been committed, and he was the first to carry the tidings to his assembled friends. On hearing the appalling news, Mr. Wilberforce was silent for a few moments, then lifting up his eyes and hands with a solemnity befitting his feelings, and with a tender recollection of the life and temper of the statesman, he said,—"Then he is in heaven!"

The estimate which Mr. Wilberforce had formed of Babington was given, later in life, to a mutual friend. He said that, in all his large experience, he had never met with one who exhibited the Christian character so fully and so uniformly. Two rules were on his lips, written also in his practice, which he pressed on the notice of his children,—one, that the character of a true gentleman is formed by

attention to the precept (Phil. ii. 4), "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others;" the other, never to avoid present trouble at the risk of incurring more hereafter. His own life was controlled by the first four verses of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians; a passage which, as he told one of his sons, he was used to repeat to himself, a tonic at once and a cordial, as he walked home, late at night or in the early morning, after the eager debates and angry conflicts of the House of Commons.

Mr. Babington was withdrawn from Parliament many years before Mr. Wilberforce, but he continued to keep up with him an affectionate intercourse; and he was consulted by him in 1824, when he was deliberating on the propriety of leaving Parliament, which he did early in the following year. Wilberforce had written just before to Babington, in answer to a letter in which his friend had expressed his delight at witnessing the comfort he enjoyed in the love and attention of his children; these things, he said, were to a sick man a cordial, and softened as well as improved the heart. In return, Wilberforce had inquired of Babington's family history, and had received a favourable picture of it from one of his sons, though, as he truly remarks, —"The young hands do not look very deep in their view of people at our time of life; and while all is outwardly cheerful, and therefore to their eyes unclouded sunshine, we parents may have our secret anxieties and griefs." His own compunction on

leaving the House, and his regrets, he speaks of freely to this chosen friend—"regrets from the consciousness of my having made so poor a use of the talents committed to my stewardship. The heart knows its own bitterness; we alone know ourselves, the opportunities we have enjoyed, and the comparative use we have made of them; but it is only to your friendly ear that I breathe out my secret sorrows. Well, it is an unspeakable consolation that we serve a gracious Master, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not."

After retiring from Parliament, Mr. Babington lived at Rothley Temple. As a landlord and a magistrate, he was much esteemed. As an agriculturist, he was in advance of his neighbours; he had diligently studied Arthur Young's and other agricultural works, and had borrowed from these the improvements which are now general; the allotment system for peasants, the scheme of thorough drainage for lands, were adopted by him, and during his lifetime he trebled the value of his estate. Troubles darkened some of his later years; infirmities broke the vigorous frame; but the peace, which had shed its sunshine, in the earlier stages of life, over his heart and home, remained unclouded to the end. The old man, verging on eighty, could point, like the Patriarch, to the fulness of His blessings, and the constancy of Divine care. When his death took place, a clergyman (afterwards a dignitary in the Church) who held a living near, and had known the old man for nearly twenty years, asked leave to preach a funeral sermon in his parish church

the Sunday after his death. There was a crowded audience, of tenants who held his lands, of labourers who had worked on his estate. To these, who had known him so well, the sermon was addressed. It soared rather above them; for though in beautiful language, it took an elevated theme, and described the nature and the employments of glorified spirits, and referred to him who had lately left them, and had joined, as they were well assured, that celestial throng. But when the preacher sought to take up the evidences of this assurance which his life and character supplied, emotion stopped him, and he was forced abruptly to close. But the close was more impressive than a more elaborate argument:—"Why do I venture," he said, "to call him blessed? Because his own Master has already impressed that title upon him." And then he repeated slowly the well-known verses, leaving to his hearers to make, as each who knew him did, the application:—

"Blessed are the poor in spirit."
"Blessed are the meek."
"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."
"Blessed are the merciful."
"Blessed are the pure in heart."
"Blessed are the peacemakers."

These were the qualities of him who had lived among them, and it was amongst the tears of his friends and neighbours that these characteristics were pointed out. Such was Thomas Babington, one of Wilberforce's dearest friends.

CHAPTER XII.

ZACHARY MACAULAY, ESQ.

In October, 1800, there was born, under the hospitable roof of Rothley Temple, the infant son of Zachary Macaulay, to whom was given the name of Thomas Babington. The birth of this their first child was gratefully recorded by the father and mother; but about two years after, in the autumn of 1802, a severe illness threatened the hopes of the parents and the life of the child. With this brief exception everything seemed to prosper with the infant boy. It was like the story of the Eastern genius, who stood by the child's cradle, and showered upon it all sorts of munificent gifts: quickness of perception, a marvellous memory, a bright imagination, genius both for poetry and prose, were all heaped, in bountiful largess, on this favoured child. For the ordinary sports or the idle stories of childhood he had no appetite, but a devouring thirst for knowledge possessed him early. While other children amused themselves with play, or with reading a fairy tale, he ransacked books of history, and pored, when he could hardly hold them, over the

ponderous folios of Froissart, Holinshed, and Rapin. Favouring circumstances, varied resources, parental care, and friendly interest, attended his early days. He was sheltered under the roof of Rothley Temple, where he enjoyed the society and example of a well-conducted and happy household. He could expatiate in the glades of Needwood Forest, and be warmed by the sunshine of Gisborne's favoured home. He was a welcome guest at Cowslip Green and Barley Wood, where Hannah More, who had conversed with the wit and learning of Johnson's age, took delight in recounting tales of the past, and the incidents of her literary life, to rouse the boy's ardour and stimulate his intellect. His father's house at Clapham, though modest and simple, placed before him a model of self-denial and untiring industry; and the company of some of the worthiest men of London refreshed the student's leisure, and fired his emulation. His hours of recreation were spent where he could hear the best conversation of his day, and mix with the most earnest and intelligent men. For to his early years were thrown freely open—better than the gardens of the Hesperides—the lawns and shrubberies of Broomfield and Battersea Rise, the verandah and the shades of Kensington Gore. It was impossible for any fortune to present to an aspiring mind more favouring circumstances, and never were signal advantages offered to a mind more able to use them. From the advantages of this domestic interior he passed to a first-rate school, under a private tutor chosen from among the English clergy for his judgment, learning, and piety, which he employed in

the instruction of youth in one of the halls of Hertfordshire with rare tact, and furnished to the ardour of his new pupil the activity and rivalry of others equally studious. There his talents burst forth with a rapid growth, like a Russian spring. Every subject put before him he mastered. The facts of history, the incidents of literature, the tales of voyages, the adventures of remarkable men, all that concerned man either in the past or the present, engaged his curiosity and fixed his interest. The traditions of Dr. Johnson's devouring appetite for books, his acumen in conversation, and his thirst for knowledge, were in him revived. He remembered all he heard; his curiosity was great; his love of discussion unwearied. He seemed to know everything, and to be able to talk on everything. His perception was so quick, and his memory so strong, that a single perusal of a long article in the *Times* enabled him to give from memory its substance, and great part of its words. And as he forgot nothing, the heaps of facts which he gathered were piled up, and laid aside for use, ready at call. So that, from the head-dresses in the days of Queen Bess, to the wigs, caps, and patches in the days of Queen Anne, he was prepared with fact and proof, and could have given directions for a Royal masque after the fashions of any reign in English history, or instruction to a Royal perruquier.

Poetry flowed from him in a copious stream; and the groves of Aspenden Hall heard him, as he walked with rapid steps, pouring forth one or two hundred lines of verse, English or Latin, struck off

at once, and laid up in his capacious memory to be written down at will. If such was the facility of his poetry, not less ready was his prose. As soon as the call came, the demand was met; and pages, covered, fast as he could write them, with thoughts expressed in glowing words and lit up by happy illustrations, were poured forth, and soon were reduced to print, to startle and dazzle mankind. No wonder that when, disciplined by severe studies and by the training of Cambridge, he rose there to conspicuous eminence, he at once delighted his tutors and astonished his cotemporaries. When he entered life he entered it with bright expectations, and all who knew him prophesied his distinction. Little wonder that his friends and parents looked with intense interest to his future course, as he stood, thus equipped, on the threshold of life, and that they cherished many a fond hope, afterwards realized in his rapid and brilliant career.

Yet it is not of this eminent person, Lord Macaulay, with his world-wide reputation, that we are about to speak. He needs no notice from us. We are to trace the fortunes of his father, and speak of services little known, yet of sterling excellence. His qualities were little observed, and carefully concealed. His truly was worth, quiet in its peculiar walk, unostentatious in work, rigorous in self-forgetfulness; but his services to humanity were of priceless value. Zachary Macaulay, though now best known as the father of his distinguished son, was, when judged by himself, no common man. We can hardly, indeed, imagine a person more different in

his gifts from his son. Even his outward appearance was dissimilar. The staid manner, stern look, and grave deportment, conveyed indeed a correct impression of the mind; for he had not the characteristics of a Highlander, the Celtic fervour and vein of fancy; but resembled the Scotchman of the Lowlands in caution, secretiveness, slow but sure judgment, and inflexible decision. He was the son of the minister of Cardross, in the county of Dumbarton, and he had that patent of nobility, of which Lord Campbell and Wilkie used to boast, that he was born in a Presbyterian manse. From his father's door he could see the estuary of the Clyde crowded with ships and whitened with their sails; he could look across to the busy port of Greenock, picturesque at a distance, and the gleaming shores of Roseneath. To the north he could catch the gables and turrets of the quaint castle of Ardincaple, rising out of its woods of Scotch pine. Within half an hour's walk he might look on the blue waters of Loch Lomond, shining like a silver mirror among rocks and coppice woods; and he could follow with his eye the shadows of the clouds as they passed over and darkened the lake, or cast their outline on the flanks and shoulders of Ben Lomond. But born among this exquisite scenery, with a childhood nursed in the poetry of glen and hill, he was without any touch of fancy in his own composition; nor did a ray of imagination ever cross and light up the calm and grave intellect. For all that appeared in his temperament, he might have drawn breath in one of the wynds of Glasgow, have spent his childhood in the smoky Gallowgate,

or played as a boy beside the Luckenbooth of Auld Reekie. The serious face, with its grey eyes and hanging eyebrows, the fixed look and resolute manner, marked the disposition of a sinewy mind, of unbending uprightness, neither to be turned aside by impulse nor led astray by passion. From other sources than his paternal origin did his eloquent son derive his genius. While his son was a boy, still more when he had grown up to manhood, the father listened to his copious and brilliant conversation with a sort of fond surprise; and, when he read the pages which flowed from his hand, which soon became the delight of thousands, he wondered how a child of his should pour forth such marvellous conceptions. For he himself was slow of speech, and of constrained utterance; and though he thought clearly, and could write forcibly, ready words to speak his thoughts were wanting. But if in words sparing, in deeds he was eloquent; rich in self-devotion, and labour, and stern self denial. So his life was like a stirring drama, where the story leads us through rare incidents among the deeds of noble men, and, while the scene changes, the acts and actors remain the same, and you feel yourself moving among heroes, and breathing the air of greatness.

It was through a strange discipline that Zachary Macaulay was prepared for his work. Before he had thought of his mission, far less seriously accepted it, he was fashioned for it by circumstances plainly remarkable. In these days, Glasgow, like Bristol, had a close connection with the West India colonies; and the magnates of Glasgow, who occupied

what were then reckoned the sumptuous dwellings of Glassford Street and Virginia Street, used to ship off Scotch wares to the plantations of the West Indies, in exchange for the coffee and sugar produce of the tropics. The charge of the counting-houses which they established in the West Indies, the oversight of their plantations, and the management of their slaves, were committed by them to Scotch youths, who thus found in the colonies a career of enterprise and openings to fortune. The son of the minister of Cardross, favoured by one of these great mercantile houses, was sent, at an early age, to be the overseer of an estate in Jamaica. There he remained for eight years, and so approved himself to his employers, that he was promoted to be the sole manager of the estate. These duties placed him in the full front of the system of slavery, and gave him a perfect insight into all its details. On the estate which he managed he set himself to improve the lot of the negro; but he saw round him abundant signs of the evils of a degraded race subjected to irresponsible control. His own position enabled him, indeed, as he wrote to a friend, "to alleviate the hardships of a considerable number of my fellow-creatures, and to render the bitter cup of servitude as palatable as possible." But, though he could thus abate evils over a narrow area, the scenes of cruelty and licentiousness which he witnessed on a large scale painfully moved him; and, as he could do nothing to counteract them, he took the first opportunity of escaping from a position which involved him in duties irksome and intolerable. He

was released from this position by the unlooked-for interposition of Henry Thornton.

A society had been formed, soon after the introduction of the Abolition question into Parliament, which had two objects: the civilization of Africa; and to provide a refuge for those negroes who, availing themselves of English law, as declared by the famous Judgment of our Courts in 1783, had fled from the hands of their masters. This society, which took shape as the Sierra Leone Company, and of which Mr. Henry Thornton was chairman, obtained, in 1791, a charter from the Crown, and started with a capital of £150,000. To this colony were sent a large body of liberated negroes, gathered in Jamaica, and a body of blacks from Nova Scotia, who had served in the British navy. The Board of Directors of the new Company in England was composed of eminent men, among whom were Granville Sharpe and Pitt's brother-in-law Mr. Eliot, Charles Grant, Wilberforce, and Henry Thornton. Mr. H. Thornton heard from Mr. Babington of young Macaulay's conduct in Jamaica—his blameless purity and sturdy integrity. He sent for him to fill a place in the government of the infant colony. By a resolution of the Board in the autumn of 1792, he was appointed second in Council at Sierra Leone; and setting sail for Africa early in the following year, he, soon after his landing, became first in Council and Governor.

It was hoped that the colony might, under a vigorous government, both discipline the negro colonists and train them to order and industry. It might also be expected to act on the surrounding

tribes, inspiring them, through the sight of wealth and its comforts, with new tastes, and opening to them markets for domestic produce. Thus it might serve to withdraw them from the detestable profits of the slave trade. At the outset, the enterprise, as has happened to many schemes of colonization, nearly suffered shipwreck. The colonists depended for a time on imported provisions, and the supply of these provisions was insufficient. Famine fell on them; with famine came disturbances. The colonists, lazy and licentious, kicked at discipline. Work was essential to their existence, but steady work was of all things that which they could least endure. While there was disorder within, dangers from without beset them; all round them were hostile observers and implacable enemies. The neighbouring tribes were jealous of the intruders; the merchants feared interference with their traffic; the slave-traders saw that, if the colony prospered, their odious trade would suffer. They stirred up the native tribes against them; and, while want stared them in the face, and riot rose against law, war hung as a black cloud on the horizon. But the new governor was equal to the emergency. His calm temper and indomitable courage stood firm as a rock, and shattered, by unbending purpose, the fluctuating elements. The rude colonists owned the sway of moral power, the Company's servants were shamed out of their squabbles, the authority of law was asserted, order took the place of confusion, the stormy waters began to subside.

Unfortunately the system pursued by the Direc-

tors was one of too close economy, the hands employed as agents were too few, and their salaries were miserably small; hence the governor, deprived of proper agents, had to do many things by his own hands, and was chained like a clerk to the desk. He was charged with the meanest drudgery, and with most incompatible duties; he was commercial agent, he was paymaster, he posted ledgers, he entered accounts in journals, he decided causes. "Besides," he writes, "I am obliged to perform the duties of chaplain, to marry people, and to deliver sermons." Still he never lost sight of his great object, the civilization of the native Africans. He employed every negro who could read or write; and so rapidly, under this stimulus, did they learn, that he was able to use many of them as schoolmasters. Schools were built, and occupied by three hundred children; at the end of the first year he could say that "he hoped in a few years there would be few in the colony unable to read the Bible." But difficulties did not cease; they multiplied. In June, 1794, a large body of the colonists from Nova Scotia broke into open rebellion. Scarce was this put down, than the French pounced on the young colony, and swept it by invasion. In the same year they attacked the town, seized it, set it on fire, destroyed the papers of the authorities, and even their clothes. For a time they remained absolutely without provisions. The governor at this time was laid low by fever, but his spirit was unbroken:—"I should be ashamed of distrusting God, after what I have already experienced of

His goodness. I thank God for all things; but above all for the peace of mind He has granted me in all our troubles." After this time of trial his health gave way.

After a short absence in Europe to recruit it, he returned to Africa, and received an affectionate welcome from his wayward negroes; but it needed all his patience to bear with their humours. The talisman, which carried him through all this, was his affection for them. They were lazy, they were fickle, they were thoughtless as spoilt children; he loved them in spite of all. "I pray God to give them better minds, and to give us a temper of meekness and forbearance under injuries however great, and provocations however galling."

His affection for the negroes had lightened his sacrifices and upheld his hopes. On first going out, he had expressed sanguine expectations of their improvement; though these were damped by experience, his affection remained. In one of his last letters he writes:—"Poor people! one cannot help loving them; with all their trying humours, they have a warmth of affection which is quite irresistible." So he went on loving and hoping, and he would not see either evil or hazard or inconvenience. "The soil is poor, but does well for provisions, coffee, cotton, &c. It is a pleasant country, with few of the insects which infest us in the West Indies." He would not even admit fully the dangers of the climate. He had, indeed, constant threatenings of dysentery, and was often laid low by fever. What then? all climates have their casualties. He braved the risk,

till at last he disbelieved it. It was amusing, in later years, to hear him, with the composure of a settled conviction, discuss the grounds why, in his judgment, the West Coast of Africa was not, after all, so unhealthy, not subject to malaria nor scourged by yellow fever, not in fact so dangerous to health as Italy, far less injurious to the constitution than Hindostan. It moved a smile to hear this grave man of fact descant to wondering groups on the chances of life in Sierra Leone; that, if Europeans would only be sober and careful, and not live hard, nor walk out too late, nor be under-fed, there was little risk. Yet he spoke of a coast where hardly a European ship touches without bringing back its freight of fever; where soldiers sicken and sailors die by hundreds; and governors, attracted by the salary, fall speedy victims; and missionaries* die off as by a plague; and bishops, in apostolic succession, earn quickly the martyr's crown. Yet he fully believed all that he said, and his own arguments at least convinced himself; and then he could point to his own example, how he had worked and escaped: for his iron frame had stood the shock, and he brought back to Europe a constitution capable of more labour than most of those who had nursed their bodies in England in inglorious ease.

All these risks he bore unflinchingly, so long as duty called him to meet them. He had formed a strong attachment, his domestic prospects were bright, but he would not marry nor forsake the colony till its fortunes were assured. In 1799 he finally left

* In twenty years, twenty-five out of thirty-eight died.

Africa, and his marriage took place the same year. But his return to England was only a change of labour, for hard work was still his lot. With thanks for past services, he was appointed Secretary to the Board of Directors of Sierra Leone, and he continued in that employment till the colony, in 1808, was transferred to the Crown. To the Government, indeed, he was recommended for service; but it is not to such men that ministers give their favours. Along with this sphere of labour he was chosen a member of the Abolition Committee, and, till the abolition was carried in 1807, he worked harder than them all. In the African Institution he performed, for five years, the duty of Secretary gratuitously; and when he retired, a vote of thanks from the Directors, and a testimonial, marked their sense of his services; but in the long struggle which followed abolition, and which only ended, in 1833, in the extinction of slavery, he took the most strenuous part. A cloud of pamphlets, containing facts and digests of evidence, followed from his pen; and the Anti-Slavery Reporters, as they came out, were full of statistics drawn up by him, condensed out of Blue Books through which he had painfully waded, sitting up half the night to collate and sift the evidence, and to condense into thirty pages the contents of ponderous folios. So, when any fact was wanted, he was there, a walking encyclopædia; as Wilberforce wittily said, "Let us look it out in Macaulay."

The tricks and wiles of slave-traders were all tracked out and exposed by him, as Wilberforce

says,* "from the first faint and distant view you had of the thief, with scarcely light sufficient to ascertain his substance and features, till the moment when he is dragged into open day in all his deformity." When, in this long struggle, which lasted the lifetime of a generation, Wilberforce wanted help, a head, a pen, or a hand, Macaulay was the person to whom he turned. Thus he writes to him from Lyme for books and assistance in 1806; in 1811 for advice, from Yoxall Lodge; from Brighton, in 1816, begging him to see the Roman Catholic Mr. Butler, and engage his interest, in favour of Abolition, with the Pope†; in 1822 he must write the conclusion of the Report of the African Institution.‡ Wilberforce writes to him from Eastbourne in 1808, to engage him to set British consuls on the look out to detect British ships importing slaves into Brazil. In 1812 Wilberforce writes,—"I seem to be leaving it to others, and especially to yourself, to labour through the heat and toil of the day. You really are, however, rather to be envied than pitied, considering the happy issue of your late exertions. You and Stephen I can never envy, be your successes what they may in the African field, considering how well earned your laurels will be, let them be ever so umbrageous."

Where the work was hard, and the commission was delicate, Macaulay was sure to be sent. When the allies met in Paris in 1814, he was despatched to influence Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Welling-

* Wilb. Corresp., vol. ii. p. 169. † Ibid. vol. ii. p. 352.
‡ Life, vol. vi. p. 126.

ton, and the ministers of the Allies. So complete was the evidence he had collected, the fruit of his untiring assiduity, that the Duke of Wellington bluntly said he did not see how the French could face the facts. In 1816 Wilberforce again thanks him for his pamphlets, clear in principle and full of evidence. In 1817 he is pressing upon him the condition of Hayti. In 1821—3 he is busy with him in the preparation of materials for Parliament in order to secure further measures for the manumission of our own slaves. In Wilberforce's personal interviews with Mr. Canning, Macaulay is the first depository of the results. In the attacks made upon the Abolitionists by West Indian agents, Macaulay must write the answer.* In all sorts of newspapers, through all sorts of channels, concealed but effective, his pen appears†; and, busy as his pen, his presence was ubiquitous. Pamphlets to be written—he must write; deputations to the minister—he must be there; anti-slavery committees—he must serve; at all hours, early and late, he is ready for work. "He seems to be able," says Wilberforce, "to comprehend and analyse these Parliamentary volumes at a glance." When one part of the question was over, he takes up another; and, whether the leadership is with Wilberforce or Buxton, he is the resort of all. In 1832 he takes charge, with Buxton, of the terms agreed upon by Lord Grey's government, and gives to Wilberforce the earliest tidings.‡ To him Wilberforce wrote, near the close

* Life, vol. iii. p. 205, and vol. iv. p. 203.
† Life, vol. v. pp. 207—242. ‡ Corr., vol. ii. pp. 524—5.

of his life, in 1833:—"I congratulate you, my dear old friend, on having entered on the year which I trust will be distinguished by your seeing, at last, the mortal stroke given to the accursed slave trade."

After the great debate in 1833, when Mr. Stanley expounded the views of Government, Macaulay, a witness of the scene (his son then a subordinate member of Lord Grey's government), writes to Wilberforce of the glorious close. He tells him of the eloquent praise which had marked out to the House and country Wilberforce's long conduct of that famous cause:—"My dear friend, let me unite with you in thanks to God for this mercy." But even when this event took place, his labours were not at an end; he transferred them to France, to stimulate the Society established in Paris for the abolition of slavery. Publications were written by him in French on the state of Hayti, on the state of the English colonies, of the West Indies, on the shocking condition of the French colonies; these works were composed during the weakness of his later years, and were acknowledged with the deepest gratitude by the anti-slavery societies both of England and of France.

Nor were his labours confined to this department; he was no less busily employed on the other questions which arose during the agitated period of Wilberforce's public life. When the great conflict on the admission of missionaries to India, at the renewal of the Charter, arose, he was the man on whom all relied to prepare evidence and stir

up petitions. The ostensible actors were members of Parliament and East India Directors. Grant took an effective part at the India House; various members, with Wilberforce as their leader, took part within the House, where evidence was heard at the bar; deputations waited on Government, and the question was keenly debated on the floor of the House. But the real workshop was behind; there lay the manufactory which wrought and moulded the opinions of the country. Henry Thornton, writing in the spring of 1812 to Bowdler, and bringing up, as he tells him, the latest news on the question in which both were interested, writes thus:—"We are occupied chiefly about the religious part of the East Indian subject. Petitions pour in in immense numbers; and if the Secretary of State was to break into the house of the chief conspirator against the peace of India, which is no other than that of Babington, he would find there some hundred petitions ready for presentation, and doubtless a variety of other seditious papers, and our whole plan for organizing the country. Macaulay is in truth the real agent who has written his circulars, and received those petitions in answer."

Such services, laborious and unostentatious as they were, were not merely unrewarded; they exposed him to bitter attacks. It was well known by those interested in the slavery question, that his unwearied brain and his inflexible purpose gave to the Abolition cause its backbone and sinews. The planters hated and feared him; they maligned his character and his motives; they whispered stories

against him in secret; and at length slander, emboldened by impunity, took shape and substance. They had ransacked his life and history in the West Indies in order to find charges against him, but there they failed. At last they turned to Africa, and they found a Governor, who had succeeded him in Sierra Leone, who was induced to trump up a miserable accusation against him in 1814. He was not, indeed, moved by this, or disturbed. His friends were more vexed than he. "Poor Macaulay," writes Wilberforce, "after all his sufferings, labours, and disinterestedness for Africa, is in reality put on his defence, showing the mortification of many even well disposed people, jealous, and taken up with idle and malignant tales against him. .... Yet he will come pure out of the fire." He met the attack with a prompt refutation; and the report of the Sierra Leone committee, which sat on the case, dispelled the cloud, and cleared his character. He might have demanded more than an acquittal; he might have insisted on the censure of his adversary, and "pressed," says Wilberforce, "for a more triumphant, and really therefore more just, vindication." But this would have caused a division among the supporters of Abolition, and therefore he forbore.* With perfect calmness he took the penalties of his post, as well as its labours. Why he so bore himself, why he so meekly suffered, appears in the letters which passed between him and Wilberforce during his residence in Africa, which

* Wilb. Life, vol. iv. pp. 152, 153.

illustrated his motives. He had no wish that his name should be mentioned, or his sacrifices generally known. He valued the approval of Mr. Wilberforce and a few chosen friends: "but how poor," he adds, "is even that, compared with His approbation, who seeth in secret." "I know it to be a high degree of piety which will enable us to set the fear of God above the fear of men, and it may cost a man years effectually to attain to it. I console myself, however, in my journey to that lofty pinnacle, with reflecting that the men whose favour I am most desirous of, and whose disapprobation I most dread, will prove like steps whereby the ascent will be made easier to that height where God will be all in all."

We take another specimen from one of his letters. He had received the thanks of the Directors, but these, instead of elating, alarmed him. He feared that he had written too strongly—that he had been betrayed into words of boasting. "God is my witness that I have on no occasion felt more the need of His help. What a poor, miserable, insignificant, blind, naked, and helpless object man is without Him! What I bless Him for above all is the collectedness of mind He has given me through the whole business."

One thing stands out clear—that self-renunciation was his great characteristic. He had many tastes; but when duty called him, he gave them up. He had a taste for science, and he was glad, when he could, to attend the meetings of the Royal Society; but he allowed himself little leisure for science. He had a taste for literature. In that branch in which

his son became distinguished, he might have gained money and fame. His grasp of facts was great; his style was vigorous. His monthly review of politics in the Christian Observer was singularly terse and clear; but in literature he took (as was his wont) the post which has the hardest work and least fame. He became Editor of that periodical, which held unfashionable opinions, and proclaimed obnoxious truths. He managed it with singular tact; he prevailed on persons to write in it, whom none but he could persuade. He induced Henry Thornton to write, and Robert Grant, and Wilberforce, and Bowdler. Their writings were noticed; his part was in the shade. He had talents for business. These he might have turned to account, and thus made himself rich; but he interrupted business to work the work of the philanthropist, and so remained poor. He was social; he loved days of leisure, and the ease, which all men love: but he rarely took rest. Hannah More was his valued friend: she was always entreating him to come to Barley Wood, and to enjoy the repose of the country. He esteemed her, and he would fain have enjoyed her society; but his visits were few, and they were brief. He was wanted for the drudgery of London, and from that drudgery he would not depart. In the autumn holidays of 1823 his old friend Wilberforce writes to him from North Wales:—"I wish that you could view the prospect from my window—Cader Idris in all his grandeur. But you, my dear friend, are better employed; brightening a crown, I trust, for future honour, and benefitting your fellow-

creatures." Hours of ease, literary fame, the poet's laurels, the writer's gains, had little charms for him. One object filled his eye and engrossed his soul:—

> "He had heard the bay of the bloodhound
> On the track of the hunted slave,
> The lash and the curse of the master,
> And the groan that the captive gave."

He had seen in the cane fields of Jamaica the negro's weary step and sunken condition; he had watched him toiling under tropical suns, and engaged through long nights in the intolerable pressure of sugar straining. In these works he had seen him faint and fail. He had tracked him to his African home by the steaming rivers of reeds and mangroves, and he felt that he loved that rude home as fondly as the Highlander loves his hut in the glens of Sutherland and Argyle. From the reedy banks of Africa he had seen him torn; bound, manacled, and driven like a beast on shipboard, to be squeezed into a stifling hold, to die worse than the death of a dog, and to be flung like carrion into the waves. The memory of these horrors haunted him, and he never rested till they were put down. He lived to see the British Parliament fling slavery from it as an accursed thing, with great risk, at heavy cost. When he saw this, he was content. Yet not so; for he took across to France his unconquerable ardour, and he wrought, by repeated publications, to instruct and enlighten the French mind. With him the desire of African freedom was the master desire to which all other feelings were subordinated. He was active in other departments of philanthropy,

but always with a reserve in his own mind for this. He was one of the original founders of the Bible Society; but it was with the hope that Africa would enjoy the Bible. He was one of the earliest supporters of the Church Missionary Society, but it was that its first efforts should be turned to Africa; and before ten years had passed he had the satisfaction of seeing four missions planted on African soil.

These were his labours: It was these which left on his wrinkled countenance the look of weariness, and lines of care. He continued his work when nature and its growing infirmities bade him cease. They counselled rest, but rest he would not take while these crimes endured. Illness at length, sore and disabling, baffled the indomitable mind. Two years of suffering, and then, in his seventy-first year, in May, 1838, came the welcome rest. By that time, in spite of his self-renunciation, he was known. The French Society for the Abolition of Slavery had already enrolled his name in golden letters by the side of Wilberforce. A large subscription was gathered, headed by the highest names in both Houses of Parliament, and supported by all the best friends of the Abolition cause. They raised a monument to his memory in the Abbey of Westminster, where in later years his distinguished son was to be laid. These were records which he had no ways sought, and of which he was not ambitious. One thing he had sought: he had lived in his Master's eye, in the light of high endeavour, pursuing beneficent duties in humble reverence for the

Divine commands. Nor can we doubt that, when the story of earth is closed, and the labours of good men are reckoned up and recorded, his will be found a high place on the roll of those who have served humanity in the faith and fear of God; and, though content to live unknown on earth, he will then have a bright and a durable crown.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOHN THORNTON, ESQ.

Among the group assembled in Mr. Wilberforce's house in Palace Yard, when the vote in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade had brought together his exulting friends, there was one who, by a bystander like Heber, might easily have passed unnoticed. There was nothing, indeed, to attract notice either in his appearance or his deportment. He was not handsome. His was one of those plain strong faces which we meet with in Saxon Englishmen. A forehead well developed bespoke intellectual power; full blue eyes expressed thought and resolution; the lower part of the face, the chin and the lips, announced a determined will; but you might easily have passed him by among the persons who surrounded him. He wore a blue coat with metal buttons, and powdered hair, as was then the common dress of the ordinary gentleman. His look was grave, but rather fixed: his manner composed, nothing about him that told of impulse: a contrast with the varying countenance and flexible movements of Wilberforce. A plain Englishman all over, the antipodes to the chattering vivacity and expressive

pantomime of a Frenchman. A thoughtful man, you would have called him: in moments of excitement, so quiet as to seem unimpassioned—reserved and silent, when others were full of talk and movement. Yet to this grave man Wilberforce addressed himself, as if he singled him out for special notice, and turned to him as his chief friend. He addressed him by his Christian name, and asked what measure they should take next. You would have discovered at once that he was Wilberforce's chief adviser. He was, perhaps, his earliest, and at this time his most trusted friend. These sketches would be indeed imperfect, if they did not include a notice of Henry Thornton.

More than a century and a half ago—when the wealth of London was petty and its merchants were few, and the South Sea bubble had burst and swept away many fortunes, and the trade to the West Indies was trifling, and a single factory held the traffic to the East Indies—in an old manor-house hard by the Clapham Common, now girt with smart villas, then compassed with a few ordinary houses, lived Robert Thornton, a London merchant. In his house, on the 1st of April, 1720, was born to him a son, whom he named John. Their business was in the Russian trade, then an important branch, cultivated by considerable mercantile houses in London and Hull. John Thornton, when he grew to man's estate, continued the traditions of his house, and raised the family fortunes. He was in business an active merchant, keen in watching opportunities, and skilful in using them. Eminent

for other qualities, he never lost the practised eye of the merchant and his watchful observation. In one of his tours in Ireland, undertaken late in life, to recruit, as was his habit, his strength, and also to furnish a holiday at his own cost to hard-worked ministers of the Gospel whom he took with him, he showed the habits which peculiarly characterized him. Walking out in the early morning at Cork, he turned down to the harbour, where a number of vessels, laden with tallow, had just come in. A few questions, addressed by him to the persons connected with them, put him in possession of the facts, and by a stroke of his pen he made the cargoes his own. By this adventure he cleared a handsome profit, more than enough to cover the cost of his tour. From the harbour he and his friend strolled into a nursery-garden, where they fell in with its humble proprietor. The poor man was in great perplexity, sore hampered for want of capital. Mr. Thornton talked to him, ascertained his circumstances, inquired into his character; and being satisfied, he, by another stroke of his pen, helped him out of his troubles, and set him fairly on his feet. We give another example, which is creditable to both the persons concerned; and, as it has been imperfectly stated, we now give it as it occurred, derived from the grandson of one of the parties. There was a young merchant, engaged in business, who attracted Mr. Thornton's notice. A follower of Wesley, he was warmly attached to him, but no less attached to the Church of England, of which he was a sincere admirer. His family was large, but his capital small.

The want of capital cramped his business. One day Mr. Thornton accosted him on the Exchange, and thus addressed him :—"John, I have been thinking much of you and your circumstances. I think, if you had a larger capital, you would soon do a better business." The young man admitted that this was true. "Well," added Mr. Thornton, "ten thousand pounds are at your service as a loan." If you prosper, you will repay me. If you don't, you will never hear of the debt." The young merchant thanked him warmly, but begged a few days for consideration : but days passed, and he did not approach Mr. Thornton, who at last addressed him again and asked him the reason of his silence. "I have been thinking," was the answer, "of your kind offer; but I feel that I must decline it. If I lost your money, I should be very unhappy; and, through the blessing of God, I am now doing a fair business, and had better remain as I am." Such facts illustrate character, and deserve a record.

In these traits we have an epitome of the man; a mind not remarkable for intellectual power, but full of sound sense and practical talents well applied. His industry, tact, and knowledge of business, raised him to wealth, and amongst the thriving merchants of the Metropolis he soon held a high position. But he is better known for benevolence, to an amount which was in those days rare, and remarkable at any time. This virtue gave him, and justly, the title of Munificent. Large gains brought him large resources; and a large fortune was spent, not in buying lands and building houses, or setting up a

costly establishment, displaying the pomp of plate and splendour of entertainment, but in the better luxury of a discriminating benevolence. His charity ranged far and wide as his business; his was the hand of a merchant prince, scattering largesses over England, and across the seas in other lands, where he dropped seeds of good that bore fruit after he was gone. Wilberforce, who observed him carefully, thus speaks of him:—"It was by living with great simplicity of intention and conduct in the practice of a Christian life, more than by any superiority of understanding or of knowledge, that John Thornton rendered his name illustrious. . . . . He anticipated the disposition and pursuits of the succeeding generation. He devoted large sums annually to charitable purposes, especially to the promotion of the cause of religion, both in his own and other countries."*

Thus, whilst the poor around him partook of his bounty, he supported schemes of education and piety. Young men of promise were sent by him to college; public seminaries were supplied from his purse; the Dissenting Academy of Newport-Pagnell was maintained at his cost for twenty-seven years. After his death, his son Henry was visited by a student from the United States, who had been brought up in a college, founded during the heats of the American War, which owed both its origin and support to the liberality of John Thornton and the Earl of Dartmouth. No wonder that his son records this with honest pride, pointing "to an institution

* Life, vol. i. pp. 283, 284.

containing 150 to 200 scholars, in the New World, now spreading its branches in that hemisphere, of which a few hundred pounds, opportunely given by my own parent, sustained the existence." *

Another channel through which John Thornton applied his liberality, was one characteristic of himself. It was costly, but it had great results. It gave comfort to worthy pastors, help to the poor, hospitality to the stranger, and it also promoted religion. His plan was, to buy livings, and present to them deserving clergymen; or when he found clergymen in livings slenderly endowed, starving on narrow incomes, he supplied them with a yearly revenue, that they might give abundant charity and exercise hospitality. Thus he gave John Newton £200 a year, during his residence at Olney. He transplanted him to St. Mary Woolnoth, which he purchased for him. He furnished an income to another clergyman in a small vicarage in Bedfordshire. He sent yearly sums to the Independent minister at Newport-Pagnell, to supply him with resources for charity and with books for his studies. He writes to him:—"I should not have suspected your business at Oxford, but it is a blessed one; and when the wheels stick, I hope to be able to supply you with somewhat that will keep them going. I think the expense is heavier than you are aware of." Again, "I am glad you are beginning a Sunday school; when you want assistance, you know where to come for it; when you want money, remember I am your banker, and draw

* MS. Letter of Henry Thornton, Esq.

freely." * Another mode of charity adopted by him was practical and novel. When he took his holiday he carried with him some hard-worked ministers, dissenters or clergymen, to the coast to recruit their strength, entertaining them as his guests. Mr. Bull was his frequent companion on his Irish tours, to the coast of Norfolk, the coast of Sussex, and the Isle of Wight. He provided for him every comfort, and indulged him in the taste which the dissenter shared with Newton, the love of his pipe; he arranged for him an arbour (we owe an apology to our anti-tobacco friends for mentioning it) where the worthy man might indulge his weakness, and smoke the fragrant weed. Mr. Thornton's half-sister had married Wilberforce, the uncle of the philanthropist, and under their roof at Wimbledon the boy spent some of his early years. The uncle and aunt were religious; but their religion was made attractive to the boy—it laid great hold of his mind, and thoroughly won his affections. "I loved them," he says, "as parents; indeed I was almost heartbroken at the separation." To his uncle he writes, after they were parted, "I can never forget you as long as I live." Mrs. Wilberforce was, like her brother Mr. Thornton, catholic in her views of religion; she drew no distinction between church and chapel, she followed as her guide any preacher who could benefit her—at one time Newton, then Berridge, Whitfield the Methodist, or Bull the Independent. She corresponded

* Memorials of Rev. W. Bull, pp. 98, 202.

with Newton, and to her several of his letters in the "Cardiphonia" are addressed. She turned often to Mr. Bull for advice, and, in her declining years, for consolation. Both she and her brother, when Mr. Bull accompanied them on their tours, threw open their rooms to receive an audience; and Mr. Thornton encouraged Mr. Bull to itinerate as a missionary through England, and to preach wherever he could find an open door.

But to any persons who are inclined to notice these habits, either by way of imitation or censure, it is right to point out the peculiar circumstances of these times. Then first, after a long stupor, religious feeling had revived in England, and the revival was met by the strongest popular resistance. It was natural that those who were the subjects of these new impressions, should draw closer in sympathy to each other; and that, while they felt themselves animated by a new life, they should attach themselves to those who proved by their actions that they were moved by the same sentiments. When they found themselves cast off by general society, and treated as though they were lepers and outcasts, it was natural that they should regard each other as kindred, overlook the circumstances which separated them, and acknowledge a common bond. It was vain to tell old Berridge that Whitfield was a sectary, and should be driven out of his parish for not duly observing the rubric: Whitfield and Berridge preached the same truths, and were tarred and feathered with the same popular opprobrium. It was idle to tell the poet Cowper, or Newton, that their neigh-

bour Mr. Bull was a dangerous Dissenter. The Dissenter taught, in the ugly Bethesda of Newport-Pagnell, the same truths which Newton preached, and Cowper heard from the pulpit of the church at Olney. It mattered little to John Thornton whether he gave his contributions to Newton or to Bull, or took with him, in his rounds of leisure, Dr. Conyers the clergyman, or Rowland Hill who taught in the Tabernacle. Hence arose a curious compound, which in these days might occasion some distaste. In 1782, Mr. Thornton visited Hastings, and hired a house for his preaching friends, in which they might lodge and hold their services; there gathered Dr. Conyers, Newton, and Mr. Bull. "We had a delightful meeting last night," writes the Dissenter. "Mr. Newton preached in Mr. Thornton's house to about thirty." In the services, held every night and morning, clergymen and Dissenters took part. "Your visit was a refreshing time to all of us," writes Mrs. Wilberforce to Mr. Bull. Another time, Mr. Thornton arrives at Ilfracombe with Mr. Bull. In the morning, they attend church; in the evening, the Independent preaches in a house to several hundred persons. Another autumn they go to Yarmouth; and on this occasion the Dissenter is united with clergymen, with Messrs. Foster, Storry, and Venn. Mr. Foster preaches in the church, and Mr. Bull sits as a hearer. In the Independent and Wesleyan chapels of Norwich and Yarmouth, Mr. Bull officiates, and four clergymen and four Dissenting ministers are his hearers. Nay, so entirely were old differences laid aside, that the Independent

minister, stout Calvinist though he was, admired the writings of Madame Guyon, hung her portrait over his chimney, and asked his friend Cowper to translate her verses. Such was the prevailing sentiment in Mr. Thornton's times; but these times did not last, for when the flood of religious feeling began to sink, men found out wherein they differed. When the waters are out, inequalities vanish; when the waters subside, hillocks reappear, and disputants plant their feet on these, and count them great heights.

It was not, however, this catholicity of faith which drove young Wilberforce from the house of his uncle. What his friends disliked was the religious earnestness of the family, which in those days was stigmatised by the name of Methodism. It was this which terrified Wilberforce's mother, and led her to remove the boy from Wimbledon. This gave dire offence to the old Hull merchant, his grandfather. "If Billy turns Methodist, he shall not have a sixpence of mine." For Methodism was odious, whether it was found in Newton or Wesley. So the boy was hurried away, and his connection with his aunt, and with John Thornton, was abruptly closed. This event happened in 1771, and not till Wilberforce's opinions had undergone a complete reversal, was his intercourse with his aunt renewed.

But when, with his own views altered, he again saw Mr. Thornton, he was greatly impressed by his character. His beneficence, his composure, and his unaffected happiness, struck him.* By this time

* Wilberforce's Life, vol. i. pp. 98—104.

Wilberforce had settled in the Adelphi, in order to be nearer Newton, and to attend his church; but he longed for a quiet retreat, where he might collect his thoughts, and might enjoy the converse of more experienced friends. At this juncture, John Thornton threw open to him his villa at Clapham. He left him, with considerate kindness, to keep his own hours, and not to be restrained by the peculiar habits of an old man; for John Thornton used to dine at two; on several evenings in the week he attended church; and then retired to his study in the upper part of the house, where he sat up to a late hour engaged in religious exercises.* It was here that he studied Mr. Bull's Commentary on the Psalms, for which he had supplied him with books; he transcribed the Commentary with his own hand, and had reached the 138th Psalm at the time of his death.†

Quaint glimpses the life of John Thornton gives us of the habits of these times. When he and his friends resorted for their holiday to the coast, we find them rising at six and breakfasting at eight; exposition of Scripture and prayers till half-past nine; at three they dined, and after three they smoked their pipes in the arbour of the garden by the shore. Tea at half-past five, and then they sallied forth, Dissenter and Churchman, to preach or to hear preaching in church, chapel, or apartment.‡ One of Mr. Thornton's favourite com-

* Wilberforce's Life, vol. i. p. 284.

† Memorials of Rev. W. Bull, p. 149. ‡ Ibid. pp. 153, 181.

panions in these wanderings was William Bull. The worthy man was large and heavy, and, like stout bodies, he moved slowly. He was often ailing, and so inclined to rest. Mr. Thornton, on the contrary, was brisk, and in perpetual movement. The poet Cowper tells us what sort of a person the stout Independent was. "A Dissenter," he writes of Mr. Bull, "but a liberal one; a man of letters and of genius; a master of a fine imagination; or rather not master of it, for it runs away with him. He can be lively without levity, and pensive without dejection. But he smokes tobacco! Nothing is perfect. *Nihil est ab omni parte beatum.*" On the other hand, Mr. Thornton was without a particle of imagination—a matter-of-fact man, who never rose an inch above the earth, and had no wings; but busy, active, industrious. So he drags his stout friend with him, reluctant, *multa gemens*, seeking rest and finding it not. Away they go to Scotland in midwinter. In vain the worthy preacher protests that the season is unfavourable—better wait for the summer. But what Mr. Thornton has once decided, must be done. He has been in Russia in midwinter, and found it possible; winter will therefore suit Scotland perfectly, and is the fit season for their tour. So, in the snows of January, 1789, the Dissenter and John Thornton started for the north—then a severe journey, but a post-chaise and four horses carried them through it. In Edinburgh they dined with Dr. Erskine, and heard him preach. Crossing the Firth from Leith, they landed in Fife. Starting in the afternoon, with only eighteen miles

to travel, they found bad roads blocked with snow, the chaise stuck, and night came on. Late in the evening they reached Melville. Mr. Thornton's only daughter had married Lord Balgonie, the old Earl of Leven's heir; and in the ancient house of Melville the London merchant and his chaplain were entertained. Provision was made for the good preacher's infirmities, for he found on the dressing-table of his bedroom a dozen pipes laid in order; and he writes to his wife, "Just out of bed, with a charming fire, and a pipe in my mouth." He was welcomed with an old-fashioned hospitality by his stately hosts, and he writes warmly of their kindness and excellence, right generous, old-fashioned nobility. The first evening they were entertained at supper; but before this meal, a great bell rang for prayers, and Mr. Bull was called upon to be chaplain. Excursions from Melville showed the travellers something of the neighbourhood, but they found a different Scotland from ours. Roads bad, "full of ice and snow, and the country had a very dreary look; mountains covered with snow, and valleys streaming with floods, barren heaths and moors for miles together." The fare of the common people seemed to them as rough as the country. "The common people," he says, "get neither meat, nor butter, nor honey, but oatmeal with some small beer poured over it." This porridge, however, though sung by the muse of Burns, did not please the southern pastor who had his dwelling in the meadows of Bucks. To his horror, in the midst of the fine dishes which covered the hospitable board

of Melville, he discovers this unwelcome intruder. "This is one dish we always see on the table. I tasted it, and found it very much like the bran and water that is stirred together to fatten chickens or to feed hogs; but the great folks seem to like it exceedingly well." Mr. Bull preached in the parish church at Melville, and then through Kinross and Stirling the tourists came to Glasgow. They returned through Yorkshire, visiting Helmsley, in which Mr. Thornton's brother-in-law, Dr. Conyers, had once laboured. There the benevolent Thornton was known. "So delighted are the people of Helmsley at Mr. Thornton's being here, that the bells have been ringing most of the afternoon—a loud-speaking mark of respect to the most deserving man in the world."

Soon after their return from Scotland, Mr. Thornton's health began to fail. He completed, indeed (it was his last labour), the new edition of "Bokatsky's Treasury," enlarging it, and adding quotations from English hymns, putting Berridge and Bull under contribution, himself the author of seven papers. He continued his activity in business, and his large correspondence, to the last. His villa was still open to his preaching friends. With strength reduced, and nerves shattered, he still received Mr. Bull at his house, and set him to conduct family prayers. "He was present, and seemed much revived, and pleased to hear me." "Mr. Thornton," Bull writes in October, "has just been down, and we have dined together; but he is extremely weak, and spoke but a few words. I have just taken

leave of him, and I think I shall never see him again." On the 16th of October, 1790, John Thornton went to Bath, then the place of resort for sickness; and on the 7th of November, without a groan, he died. On the 9th, Wilberforce enters in his journal,—"Heard this evening, that on Sunday morning, at Bath, died what was mortal of John Thornton. May my last end be like his!" "I think it probable," says Mr. Newton, "that no one man in Europe, in private life, will be so much missed. You know something of my peculiar obligations to him. To him, under the Lord, I owe all my consideration and comfort as a minister. I hope my respect and affection were in some degree proportionable. It was a pleasure to me if I only saw him passing by."

CHAPTER XIV.

HENRY THORNTON, ESQ., M.P. FOR SOUTHWARK.

After this brief sketch of the father, we turn to the history of the son. John Thornton had married Lucy Watson, the daughter of a Hull merchant: she was born in 1722, and died in 1785.* By this marriage there was issue three sons and one daughter. The daughter married Lord Balgonie, and became the Countess of Leven; an honourable name, of a lineage well illustrated. The sons were—

Samuel, who represented, first Hull, then the county of Surrey, married Miss Milnes, of a Yorkshire family, who bore him three sons and four daughters; was engaged in the same Russian trade as his father; lived at Clapham, then purchased Albury; but in the commercial reverses of the French war (1810), the business was wound-up, and Albury passed to Mr. Drummond.

The second brother was Robert, who resided at Clapham, and whose villa was celebrated for the beauty of its garden and conservatory. He was

* Her tomb may still be seen in the churchyard of Clapham, where she and her husband worshipped.

engaged in the same mercantile business, was long member for Colchester, and an East India Director. He married, but had no family.

The third brother was Henry, of whom we are to speak.

In thoughtfulness and decision of character, Henry resembled his father. Living in his father's house when Wilberforce was admitted there, he became acquainted with the young politician, and was soon attracted to him. Their pursuits in life were, indeed, different. Henry Thornton had become partner in the banking-house in Bartholomew Lane, and, from his qualities for business, soon became a leading person in it. He inherited the business talents of his father, and his untiring perseverance; but the ability, which in his father was limited to mercantile enterprise, rose in him to a higher elevation. His mind was essentially philosophic. To investigate every moral occurrence and physical problem—to trace these through their relations and connections—to analyse their elements—to extract that which was essential from the incidental,—this furnished a constant exercise to his intellectual powers. To examine carefully; to deliberate long; to balance each quality and circumstance in the scales of an equal judgment; to accept no standard but that of truth, and to bring everything to be tried by that standard; wherever law was applicable, to apply it, and where law was silent, to test the subject by rules of equity,—this was his favourite occupation, and the delight of his leisure hours. The range of mercantile business, the interests of trade, absorbing

and various as these are within the City of London, did not yield sufficient stimulants to engage and satisfy this determining and inquiring mind. His natural sphere, had such been open to him, would have been found in the profession of law within our Courts of Admiralty, where intricate questions are decided by the rules or precedents of an International code; or in our Courts of Final Jurisdiction, where great colonial and ecclesiastical questions are referred for settlement, affecting the relations of a colony with the mother country, or the delicate connexion of Church and State. Some of these questions did, in fact, come before him, in our memorable Orders in Council, involving serious difficulties, as the wisest statesmen differed upon them: momentous, as they led to the disputes between the United States and England, and at length to the bloody arbitrament of war. Such subjects had for him great attractions, and on these topics he delighted to enlarge, talking slowly, as was his wont, calmly and dispassionately, with no want of words, for a clear mind finds words to express his thoughts—never evading difficulties, nor diverted from the real end, nor turned aside to collateral topics, nor perplexed by a labyrinth of details, nor disturbed by the heat of passion. He sought out the facts with earnest care, he listened to the arguments on both sides, he gave to each its due weight, he hunted out parallel cases and authorities; and only when his research was complete, and the case lay before him clear, stripped of its accidents, and reduced to its issues, did he take it up for decision, and then, unbending as a judge, he

pronounced upon it an unwavering sentence. His decision on the Orders in Council supplies an example of this. Almost alone at first, he refused to admit their necessity or their wisdom. He weighed the arguments, and, unmoved by the authority of Mr. Fox, or of Percival's government, or by the partisan subtlety of Mr. Stephen, he unequivocally condemned them. Another instance is supplied by an article written by him for the Christian Observer soon after the death of Charles Fox, in which he reviewed the life and character of that eminent person. With no heat or hesitation, with no prejudice or bias, with a calmness which led men to feel that, in the midst of political passion, he alone could be unmoved, he assumed at once the serene attitude which is only reached by ordinary minds through the remoteness and impartiality of history.

Such a mind, shut out by circumstances from the profession of the higher branches of law, restrained by business from the researches of philosophy, sought its appropriate sphere within the House of Commons. He entered the House while yet a young man, and he remained in it to the day of his death, representing the popular borough of Southwark through eight successive Parliaments. He spent in the House, first as a bachelor, then as the father of a family, above thirty of his most active years. He early chose for himself in Parliament that line of political action which was most suited to such a temper. The struggles of party, the contests for power, had no interest for him. Without any difficulty he renounced them. He chose for himself,

like his friend Wilberforce, a line of independent politics; and to that line, throughout his life, he adhered without faltering. He was attracted early to questions which touched the science of political economy; and he followed this science into its most difficult applications, as it affected Trade and the Currency. The principles of the science he had studied carefully; and the work, which he left us on Paper Credit, shows how fully he had mastered them. The practical questions which grew out of these principles, he discussed as they presented themselves; during his time, in Parliament; confining himself chiefly to this class of topics, and speaking on these with moderation and brevity.

These, indeed, were not subjects for oratorical display. In their nature they were didactic: interesting only to a few, distasteful to the bulk of a popular assembly. They were not unsuited, however, to the mind of Henry Thornton, for he was no orator: images of fancy never attracted him; reason moved him, and he basked in its light; but imagination and casuistry fell on his intellect as the wind and waves dash on a granite cliff and are dispersed in spray. The genius which animated Wilberforce was wanting to him; nor had he his friend's flexible action, his playful fancy, or his silver voice. A matter of fact speaker, he might have seemed to many dull, but that you saw the light of reason in the full eye, and the fixed purpose in the stately attitude and deliberate manner. He spoke, without gesture, a few grave words on subjects abstruse and obscure, but which he made clear through a lumi-

nous exposition. None could hear him without thoroughly understanding him; and, as he spoke directly and to the purpose, and also briefly, he was listened to. Hence he was soon acceptable to that impatient assembly; and by confining himself to questions which he knew thoroughly, he soon became an authority, and his opinion was looked for. Thus he made for himself a position much to be envied; and, as he attended regularly, and gave his mind to the debates of the House and to its Committees, his influence, great at first, grew steadily year by year. So that, when death came to arrest his labours, he had risen to a position which is rare in Parliament; and, had he lived a few years longer, till age had set its seal upon him, and given to his matured intellect its last mellowing power, he would have occupied a place among the few master minds to whom the House of Commons—an audience difficult but impartial, and, though fastidious, discerning—awards at length its confidence, and bows implicitly to their decisions.

Very characteristic was the first start of Henry Thornton in Parliamentary life. He entered the House of Commons a short time after his friend Wilberforce, at one of the most exciting periods of our political history. It was at the time when Lord Shelburne's ministry had fallen in 1783, and had been replaced by the startling coalition of Fox and Lord North. Every passion of politics was at its height, hope and fear, indignation and surprise, bitter enmity in the Court, burning jealousies in Parliament, out of doors a rising storm of discon-

tent. When the Coalition fell, a stripling of five-and-twenty defied a hostile majority in Parliament; and, after the fiercest contest ever known, a thunderbolt from the Throne struck the House of Commons and scattered it to the winds. After this hurricane, which lasted a year and a half, came the serene period of Mr. Pitt's first administration, which continued for seventeen years, was upheld by large majorities, and only fell at last by its own hand in 1801. During this conflict, Wilberforce fought by the side of his friend Mr. Pitt, both when he led the House under Lord Shelburne, and when he was struggling as Premier against the Coalition. When the Coalition fell, he still adhered to Mr. Pitt; and when the appeal went forth to the country, he flew on wings of friendship to carry the great county of York. When Pitt's government was settled, no one was more active in its favour, its partisan in every struggle, both during the king's illness and during the disorders of the French revolution. During this exciting period, Henry Thornton made his first speech, on a tax on receipts affecting the City of London! On this dry topic he spoke twice; in the new Parliament, he spoke in the Committee of Ways and Means; effectively, for he carried his point; candidly, for both Fox and Pitt praised him, but certainly he did not choose subjects for rhetorical display. In the same manner, throughout Pitt's ministry, he handles questions of taxes and currency, sometimes siding with the Government, not unfrequently against them; voting at times with Fox, but without passion; with Pitt, but without partisanship; not swayed by popular

feeling, for he stands up for the unpopular Income Tax and the Bank Restriction Act; and when the Opposition blame the Government, the just man acquits and defends them. Nor does he shrink from taking a prominent part when it is required—a teller on both the divisions. He follows the same course after Pitt had withdrawn from the Government; and when the fallen Minister is assailed, he rises to second Lord Belgrave, and to clear his impugned reputation. He is equally independent during the ministry of Addington, the second ministry of Pitt, and the short ministry of the Talents. By this time, his place in the House was fixed, and his authority on finance and trade established. He discussed Lord Henry Petty's financial plan with singular ability; and when a Finance Committee was nominated, first by the Whigs, then on two occasions by Percival, to examine the departments of expenditure and to devise retrenchments, Henry Thornton's name appears on them all. In their deliberations, he takes an active part; attends the Committee constantly; defends their decisions in the House; and, in defiance of the compact resistance and the corrupt exigency of officials, he denounces ministerial jobs, and demands prudent reforms. During Percival's ministry, he was uniformly fair and impartial, placing no great reliance on the wisdom of Government, but refusing to attack them in party divisions. When, however, he thinks them wrong, he frankly condemns them; and when Bankes moves to cut down reversions and abolish sinecures, Henry Thornton's name is always found

in the ranks of Reformers. Bills against bribery, Bills against embezzlement, Bills for reform of Parliament, these have his support; he takes an active part in the debates on commercial distress; in the two great Committees nominated by Percival's government, on Commercial Credit and on Bullion, his name is found. In the Bullion Committee he ranks second only to Horner, and he assists in laying down those great principles of currency which have stood the test of many years. These maxims, indeed, are now recognised by all statesmen of eminence; but it should not be forgotten, that they were first set forth clearly, and applied to practice, in the Bullion Committee, whose report was inspired by Horner and Henry Thornton. They, indeed, like all prophets, were set down as visionary theorists. Government carried its resolutions against them; but this did not shake Henry Thornton's constant mind—

"Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni."

In the great debate of 1811 arose one of those prominent discussions on the currency which mark the gravity of the question and the interest of the House. It was a battle of giants: the leading minds on both sides took part in it. The debate was opened by Horner, who was followed by Rose (Secretary of the Treasury), and in his support spoke Percival (Chancellor of the Exchequer and Premier); but between these officials interposed a speaker, to whom the House listened attentively, who spoke, as he seldom did, at length, and with a full exposition of his views. To the Premier succeeded Canning,

then the most brilliant speaker of the House, never more brilliant than in this, one of his happiest efforts, in which he handled a question confessedly obscure, and made it luminous by the graces of oratory. Yet he, in the full tide of his eloquence, turns back from his place on the floor, to point the eyes of the House to Henry Thornton, the grave and thoughtful speaker who had just instructed them by his "able and lucid speech." Unmoved by the adverse decision of Government, Henry Thornton held on his way; vindicated his principles both against Percival and Lord Liverpool; asserted them in the debate of March, 1812; renewed the discussion in December of the same year; and bequeathed to after times his views clearly set forth in his work on Paper Credit. He did not live to see these views prevail; but, while we accept them now as just and undeniable, let us remember that our assent is only confirming his statesman-like wisdom.

No doubt the differences of opinion which separated him on many questions from the Tory government, had the effect of throwing him, in his later years, more distinctly into opposition. The advocate of the Bullion Committee, of economy, purity, and Parliamentary reform, was frequently found voting in minorities against the Tory Government; but never as a partisan: temperate, as well as decided, he joined with Wilberforce in condemning the conduct of the Duke of York, and in objecting to his being replaced at the head of the army. He was opposed to the Orders in Council, and he voted with Mr. Brougham (March, 1812) for a committee

of inquiry into their effect. He thought the foreign policy of Mr. Percival and of Lord Liverpool, on many occasions, weak and disastrous. He supported, therefore, the motion for inquiry into the expedition to the Scheldt; and he voted for the censure on Lord Chatham (January and March, 1810). Acting with Bankes and Babington and Wilberforce, he threw all his weight on the side of official economy. After some hesitation (influenced, as we think, by the personal opinions and persuasive eloquence of Alexander Knox), he separated himself, before Wilberforce did, from the Protestant party. He supported the Roman Catholic Claims. But this decision (whatever we may think of it) was at least honest: his bias was in favour of the Protestant section, and he knew that his liberal opinion would wound many friends, Hannah More especially, to whom he was attached. Nor can we wonder that, on so difficult a question, the assurances of the advocates of the Roman Catholic party should have weighed with him and with others. Alexander Knox, who was persuasive both from his piety and genius, was supposed to possess, from familiar acquaintance, a knowledge of the real objects and designs of the Irish priesthood. They had convinced him that their views were changed, and that they had abandoned the ambition and intolerance of their old traditions. Convinced of this himself, he had successfully impressed his conviction on others. It was reserved for a later age to detect the truth; to ascertain, by evidence of fact, what vain hopes and delusive imaginations had been indulged.

Broken promises, bitter enmities, priestly conspiracies, and civil strife, followed with their stern lessons to chase away the visions of fancy; and experience, sober teacher, has taught us, by painful warnings, how vain and unreal were these midsummer dreams.

But, though the politics of Henry Thornton were liberal as well as independent, they were always moderate, and in the true sense of the word conservative. With the Radical party, led by Sir Francis Burdett, he was in frequent collision; and by that party, for his uprightness as well as his firmness, he was fiercely assailed. It is the more surprising, that he carried his successive elections for Southwark, and continued for two-and-thirty years to represent that populous but fickle constituency. His success, as it was not due to the arts of the demagogue, so certainly it was not brought about by the power of his purse. To the practice, we will not say of bribery—for that he loathed—but of treating in any shape, he was opposed. The employment of banners, the guinea per head then invariably given to the poorer voters, he resisted. The common arts of an election he put down with a sternness which startled his friends. How, they said, could he ever expect to carry his election? Yet he did. It was indeed a triumph of virtue over a saturnalia of vice. Curious spectacle, to see this grave man standing on the hustings before the jests and shouts of a mob, who had scarce one sentiment in common with him. They, hasty, ignorant, and fickle, caught by every cry, trusting every promise,

gulled by every assurance, gave themselves up with blind credulity to any political conjuror. Not insensible, at the same time, to more substantial things, to beef and bread—*panem et Circenses*—open taps and flaunting flags, plenty of drink by day, and guineas slipped at dusk into greasy palms. He, on the contrary, standing aloof from all such practices with a firm resolution, his hands clean, and his conscience clear, stood up before the close-packed mob, impassive to the hurricane of plaudits which met his rival, and the tempest of hisses which howled round himself. For the one candidate, the favourite of the rabble, a forest of black hands was held up; for himself, faint and scattered, a few thoughtful voices. But when the tide turned, and success attended him, and, chosen by the electors, he went in his chariot to the declaration of the poll, it was curious to watch how, as he had been unmoved by the clamours of the multitude, he was tranquil under his triumph. "I had rather," he said to his children, "have a shake of the hand from good old John Newton, than the cheers of all that foolish mob, who praise one, they don't know why." To his children, who were spectators of the contest, who had wept with vexation to see their father assailed with hisses and his voice drowned by shouts, but who clapped their hands with childish glee as they saw from the balcony the long procession with carriages and horses, decked with orange and purple ribbons, flags flying, and a shouting multitude cheering his progress; he meanwhile, unelated and calm, was only anxious to turn to

profit the incidents of the scene, and to impress on their young minds the lessons he would have them learn.

With such a candidate, it was not to be wondered at that the canvass was often an up-hill business, and the issue doubtful. More than once his fate hung trembling in the balance. At one time he regarded defeat as certain, and he rather looked forward with satisfaction to his freedom. But his friends rallied round him, and when (as was the case in 1807) the canvass was pushed into the heart of society, and reached the middle classes, they were found steadfast and firm, resolved to return their upright member, and not to disgrace themselves by rejecting an honest man. The doggrel lines, written during one of the elections, show the estimate they entertained of their member:—

"Nor place nor pension e'er got he
For self or for connection;
We shall not tax the Treasury
By Thornton's re-election."

It is a characteristic trait of the man, that while, during one of his elections, he had been engaged all day in a hot canvass, toiling through the streets of Southwark, he writes to his wife that he secured a couple of hours in the evening to carry on his work on Paper Credit. In the election of 1802, his success was doubtful. His colleague had secured his seat by assiduous attention to the voters, a sort of chronic canvass: Henry Thornton had given his time to important duties and public business. The Democratic party had secured as their candidate a

young man of popular manners and plausible address. With these advantages in their favour, a run was made against Henry Thornton, and at the nomination the show of hands was against him. But when the voting began, and he was found to stand lowest on the poll, there was a prompt rally in his favour. He had, indeed, no crowds of canvassers, nor could he win the mob to his side by witty eloquence. But his character spoke for him; and his good deeds, experienced by many, spread a savour which influenced a wide circle. To many families he had been a liberal benefactor; every one in distress knew where he could find a friend. One incident marked the popular feeling. Uneasy and anxious, his wife drove from Battersea Rise into the Borough, to learn tidings of the poll. As Mr. Thornton approached her carriage to bring her the news, a dense concourse gathered round it. One of the multitude, a poor but decent woman, stepped up to him: "Ah! sir," she said, "whether you have it here or not, you will be sure to have it in heaven." It was this character, accepted as true by thousands, which kept for Henry Thornton a seat during life in a turbulent and changeable constituency.

Nor was it in politics alone that this character served him. Grave, resolute, and reserved, he never lost a friend; and his friends felt for him what they felt for few—a warm affection deep as their esteem. He had one evidence of this, which could not but greatly move him. In the autumn of 1810, he was on his road with his family to Scotland. It was a

time of severe pressure upon banks and trading interests. Straitened by the obstacles of the war, hampered by the embargoes by which Napoleon had deranged the course of trade, many commercial houses, long reckoned safe, sunk; others could only save themselves by flying to the banks for accommodation. The bank in which Mr. Thornton was a partner felt the pressure, and felt it severely, just after their most able partner had left London for the North. Had Mr. Thornton known what was impending, he would not have absented himself. The news reached him on his route to Scotland, and caused him some embarrassment. To return from a journey undertaken and generally known, would have spread rumours which might have brought on the very crisis that was to be feared. This course, therefore, could not be thought of. He decided to continue his journey, but he opened himself in confidence to one valued friend, and stated his wish that some thousands of pounds might be placed at demand at the disposal of his partners in the bank. No sooner was the hint given than it was met by ample support. Funds poured in from all quarters —Wilberforce, with generous ardour, hastening to lead the way; and the money came in such a flood, that his bank saw itself lifted above the sands on which it was settling, and floating into deep waters with abundant resources.

In this brief review of Henry Thornton's public life, we must not omit to notice the service which he rendered, and which proved ultimately a signal benefit to the anti-slavery cause. During that long

struggle, while he reflected calmly on the best mode of civilizing Africa, he selected colonization as the most effective instrument. He hoped, by the contact of industrous settlers, to stimulate the native mind; and, by opening channels of legitimate trade, to withdraw the natives gradually from the hateful traffic in human flesh. Thus rose the colony of Sierra Leone. In this labour Henry Thornton had the assistance of several friends—of Wilberforce and Babington, of Granville Sharpe and Zachary Macaulay. But his was the directing mind. He devised the plan; he formed the company; he collected the capital; he arranged the constitution; he chose, equipped, and despatched the settlers; he selected and sent out the governor; he corresponded constantly with him; he summoned, when needful, the committee; in every difficulty the appeal was to him. He obtained grants of money from Parliament; each year, while the colony was independent, he supported the vote on the estimates; when the colony passed to the Crown, it was he who arranged the terms. In these labours, Wilberforce was content to follow the lead of his judicious friend.

In truth, Wilberforce had so thorough a confidence in Henry Thornton's judgment, that there were few questions on which he did not seek his advice. It was a curious spectacle to watch the two men within the House of Commons. The member for Southwark, tall and stately, sat listening attentively to the debate, weighing every word, and arriving at length, after a full hearing, at a clear decision. Wilberforce, eager, lively, restless, was

writing notes on the debate; now dipping his pen in the ink, and sputtering it, as he handled it awkwardly, over Sir Thomas Baring's nankeens; then jumping up in distress, and dancing round his friend with ludicrous sympathy, so as to set the House in a roar; then seated again, he resumed his attention, followed the arguments, whispered into old Bankes's ear a witty sally, which convulsed him with laughter; then, attracted by some speaker on the ministerial bench, he nodded assent, and smiled, and moved his head and body in curious contortions; but when a speaker rose on the opposite side, he lifted up his eye-glass, watched him, and followed attentively his words; till, caught by some subtle sophism of Fox, or some clever statement of Lord Henry Petty, he began to feel doubtful and embarrassed. Musing over this, observing how much was to be said on both sides, he wavers and cannot make up his mind. Thus perturbed, he begins to ask himself how he should vote. Up goes the eye-glass; he scans the benches till he discovers Henry Thornton in his seat. Away he darts, all eagerness, nimble as a boy, but anxious and full of scruples, seats himself beside his friend, and pours out his doubts. He argues, gesticulates, and inquires, in an eloquent torrent of words and thoughts. The answer soon comes, short and clear; the case stated with a lawyer's astuteness, the arguments summed up with a judge's discernment, the judgment luminous as a sunbeam. Delighted and satisfied, Wilberforce returns to his seat, settled and at rest. It was a sore loss to Wilberforce when the House of Commons no

longer held within its ranks that firm and impartial mind.

But here we conclude the public life. Let us open what is of higher interest—the pages of the inner life, and the domestic history.

CHAPTER XV.

DOMESTIC LIFE:—HENRY THORNTON.

In noticing the private life of Henry Thornton, we cannot omit the influence which Wilberforce exercised over his character. The acquaintance which had sprung up between them under John Thornton's roof had produced on the discerning mind of the younger man a strong impression. He saw that Wilberforce was in his religious convictions thoroughly sincere; that his conduct was directed by his convictions, and that his character grew with a rapid progress to a higher and purer elevation. These signs greatly struck this watchful observer. Suspicious himself of professions, and bringing principles to the test of actions, he saw that in this case religion was a reality and a moral power. "When I entered life," he says, "I saw a great deal of dishonourable conduct among people who made great professions of religion. In my father's house I met with a person of this sort. This so disgusted me, that, had it not been for the admirable pattern of consistency and disinterestedness which I saw in Mr. Wilberforce, I should have been in danger of a sort of infidelity."

Entering Parliament soon after this time, plunged into the engagements of a large borough, immersed in City business, Henry Thornton had little time for idle leisure. But when he noticed Wilberforce's habits, his resolution, in spite of weak health and indifferent eyesight, to consecrate a fixed portion of each day to religious thought; to do his public work well and manfully, but, whatever was his work, to reserve an unbroken morning hour for religion and an inviolate Sabbath, he was greatly impressed. He saw also—for Wilberforce was careful to introduce him to his friends—men engaged in active business, yet in the midst of their engagements finding time for reflection: this confirmed the impression. "I owed much to Wilberforce," he says, "in every sense, soon after I came out in life; for his enlarged mind, his affectionate and condescending manners, and his very superior piety, were exactly calculated to supply what was wanting to my improvement and my establishment in a right course. It is chiefly through him that I have been introduced to a variety of other most valuable associates."* Wilberforce used to carry him to attend his favourite preachers in London, Newton and Scott, between whom and Henry Thornton a pleasant intercourse arose.

On his father's death, in 1792, Henry Thornton had to seek a home, and he persuaded Wilberforce to share it with him. He purchased Mr. Lubbock's house and grounds at Battersea Rise, to which an

* Life, vol. i. p. 374.

extensive demesne was attached, which had been occupied for a time by Single Speech Hamilton. Reserving for himself one house, which he enlarged, he built two other houses on his demesne, one of which, the nearest, he let to Mr. Grant; the other, separated by shrubberies that melted into each other, became, under the name of Broomfield, the residence, first of Pitt's brother-in-law, Eliot; in later days, of Wilberforce. In this villa Pitt used to spend some of his brief holidays; and, in his intercourse with the two friends, he planned the Thornton Library, which has received so many pleasant groups of friends. Here, after his brief estrangement from Wilberforce, Pitt met him once more, through Eliot's friendly artifice, and resumed the close intercourse which was only interrupted by death. In this centre villa the two friends led a bachelor life, and spent all the leisure they could snatch—the one, from his house in Palace Yard, and its whirl of multifarious guests; Henry Thornton, from King's Arms Yard, in the heart of the City, where he passed his working days. Here they took counsel with Eliot and Grant on questions of philanthropy or politics; on the infant colony of Sierra Leone;* on the resolution passed in the House of Commons on India in 1793; on the varying fortunes of the Anti-Slavery warfare; who could speak, who could write, who could arrange and organize petitions.

Some milder interests occupied their minds. In 1789, when both the friends, then in delicate health,

* See Life, vol. i. p. 122.

resorted to the Bath waters, a visit made by Wilberforce to Cowslip Green, where Hannah More "had shut herself up in the country, to devote her talents," writes Wilberforce, "to the instruction of a set of wretched people sunk in heathen darkness," led to an enterprise of benevolence which long engaged both the friends. At this time Wilberforce visited the sisters in their cottage, and being sent by them to inspect the Cliffs of Cheddar, his compassionate heart was touched by the savage degradation of that neglected people. He engaged, if Hannah More would undertake the trouble of reclaiming them, that he would bear the cost; and any calls for money he would readily meet; "for," he writes, "I have a rich banker in London, Mr. H. Thornton, whom I cannot oblige so much as by drawing on him for purposes like these." In 1791, when the two friends were again at Bath, Henry Thornton accompanied Wilberforce to Cowslip Green, and thus began that intimate friendship between Hannah More and Henry Thornton which lasted through their lives, and grew closer after Thornton's marriage, when other ties arose to cement it. In 1794 Hannah More visited the two friends at Battersea Rise. She writes to her sister of the care taken of her "by the two masters," the carriages placed at her disposal, the hospitality, society, and agreeable converse. By this time she had learned to value her new friend. Wilberforce, indeed, had early told her what sort of person he was. In 1789 he had written of him "as a most excellent, upright, pure, and generous young man." He had chosen him as

his "pleasant companion," when he settled in a villa near Bath, and had dwelt on the rational life which they led together, retirement mixed with study, greatly relished "after the bustle to which they had been so long condemned." But Hannah More soon learned for herself what sort of man Henry Thornton was. She found his purse open to her in all her difficulties; and, better than his purse, his counsels. Trials had fallen on her and her sister in their benevolent labours: threats of prosecution, calumnious charges raised by obstinate prejudice and envenomed by jealousy, the rancorous bitterness of the rich proving more odious than the boorish apathy of the poor. So, when these things came upon her, she poured forth her story to her thoughtful friend: and no matter how busy the story found him—busy at his bank, in parliament, on committees, busy with his colony, helping Wilberforce in the cause of abolition (1793), or assisting him to make up his mind on the question of peace with France (1794), he was never too busy to send advice to her. Take a specimen, written some years after, in 1798, but applicable to previous years:—"Your sister Patty has seldom been more entirely out in her judgment than when she said you would tire us with your school stories. After pondering over the wars in Ireland and Egypt, it is a relief to turn one's eyes to Cheddar and to Wedmore, and to hear of the conflicts you are sustaining with the Arabs of your region." No matter what the subject, he is ready. She is publishing a series of Tracts, half political, half religious: he reviews, retouches, and prints

them. He writes some himself. "While we are taking down a dull evidence," he writes from the Finance Committee, "I seize a few minutes to write to you on the subject of Tracts. I have to tell you that I thought it right to prepare a Tract to be included in the printed volume." Again: "I have some thoughts of writing the second part of the Communion Tract, another of prayers for families, and one for Christmas-day."*

Wilberforce is preparing his book; Henry Thornton must revise it. Bachelors in these days they were; but such a life of toil. Take as a specimen what he did in the construction of his African colony. The colony had been engaging his thoughts and time with unwearied labour. He writes to Mr. Babington, Nov. 16, 1791:—"The colony works me from morning till night; the importance of the thing strikes me, and fills my mind so much that at present business, politics, friendship seem all suspended for the sake of it." "Henry Thornton has been at it," writes Wilberforce, "the whole day for some months." Thornton writes to Babington that he hopes to escape from London as soon as the ship, freighted with colonists, has sailed. But that was only to be a change of work. For he was to engage "in preparing, in a retreat from this bustle, the laws and constitution of Sierra Leone." He draws up elaborate instructions, which he sends to Mr. Babington, for the direction of Zachary Macaulay, who was about to sail as second in command; and in his

* MS. Letter, 1797—8.

letter he refers to one of fifteen sheets which he had written and sent off to Mr. Clarkson.

These solitary labours are interspersed with others in which he must summon the Directors to his help. How severe these labours were, Mr. Wilberforce's journal shows:—

"Oct. 13th. At Sierra Leone business till four o'clock, and again till past eleven at night. 14th. Sierra Leone business. 17th. Grant dined with us at H. Thornton's, and we discussed Sierra Leone. 18th. Meeting of Directors at H. Thornton's; dined there together, and at evening till late. 19th. Public meeting of Directors at King's Head. 20th. Directors at H. Thornton's all morning." From this strain Wilberforce, worn at last, fled to the rural retreat of Yoxall Lodge. There he enjoyed some weeks of rest. Not so his unwearied friend: no rest for him. At length he and Grant start for Gisborne's house. "At night Henry Thornton and Grant came in suddenly." They lay the case before their friends, and their voice is that they must all return to town. So back to the oar, and they ply it hard for a fortnight. "A fortnight at Henry Thornton's, in King's Arms Yard." Leisure seems unknown to them. They may be living at Battersea Rise; but the one is all day in the City, and Wilberforce is in his study or at his books. "Dec. 26, 1794. Much political talk with Grant and Henry Thornton, making up my mind." 27th. Much again in political talk. "29th. To town, dined Palace Yard." Again a cabinet of friends on the question, Should Wilberforce go to Yorkshire? "July, 1795.

Grant and Henry Thornton at breakfast, when we discussed what we ought to do." On the return from Berkshire, the intercourse with Pitt is renewed, his line of policy explained to Wilberforce; on this he hastens for advice to Henry Thornton. Are the difficulties of the Empire over? Other difficulties begin. The case of Mr. Venn. Still the same pair of friends. Consultation and counsel.* 1796. A cloud of political questions arises; the case of Lafayette; the prospects of the war. East India missions: still the eager philanthropist turns to his thoughtful friend. "Amended the motion, strengthened by Henry Thornton's advice and concurrence." "Consultation on East India missions: discussing all evening." "Politics: Battersea Rise all day." "Talking politics with Henry Thornton." Are Church of England missions desirable? Should there be a new Society to undertake them? The idea is started in 1797, is matured in 1800. Simeon and Venn and others must be consulted; but always Henry Thornton. (1797.) "To town, and back to dine at Henry Thornton's, where Simeon and Grant, to talk over Mission scheme."† Yet, in all this hurricane of work which the active mind of Wilberforce stirs up round him, his patient friend toils on undisturbed in the circle of his own peculiar calling. He writes to Macaulay in his African exile, to help to guide, to cheer him; he assists him when overwhelmed by disaster; he replaces with infinite pain what war and havoc have destroyed; he sends on

* Life, vol. ii. p. 136. † Ibid. p. 225.

fresh supplies of money, provisions, and men; he receives him when driven back sick; he encourages him to resume his work; he sends him to inspect English schools as models for schools on African soil; he confers with Eliot and Grant and Wilberforce, "dining early at three, that they might give a long evening to Sierra Leone."

At length on this busy life comes a welcome change—a streak of sunlight breaks in to gild the dusky horizon. In one of the rare intervals of that bachelor leisure, when Thornton was seeking health on the muirs of Buxton, a vision had crossed the path of the toiling man. He had put it from him, and had come back solitary to London. But now it met him once more. A dream hardly dwelt upon formerly, but dismissed as a passing fancy, was now to turn itself into a reality, and become his comfort and stay. But to explain this we leave St. Stephen's and the banking-house, and repair to the North, away from the sunny common of Clapham to the blustering shores of the Humber.

Nine miles from Hull there lived, during the last century, a merchant of note, Mr. Sykes. He was in the trade which engaged John Thornton, the Baltic trade; and in the same branch was another shrewd and successful merchant, William Wilberforce, grandfather of the philanthropist. When the old Wilberforce died, Mr. and Mrs. Sykes, who were friends of his widowed mother, became the friends and helpers of the fatherless boy. Mr. Sykes watched over his mercantile interests with a wary vigilance, and threw open to him the circle of his

hospitable house. In that circle Wilberforce found but one daughter; but Mr. Sykes had five boys, who became henceforth companions of the solitary boy. With them he went to school, and in their society he often spent his holidays under the roof of the affluent merchant in his villa at West Ella. The lads, with whom the boy thus grew up, were clever. One of them in after life showed distinguished powers: member for Beverley and for Hull, disciple of Fox, friend of Brougham, he joined with the latter in several of the enterprises which engaged that energetic mind.

The daughter of the house was even more fitted than the sons to influence her associates. Her character was formed for influence: thoughtful, reflective, inquiring, loving; with a spirit of eager curiosity, but with lively affections. She took delight in information. With her brother Daniel she discussed politics and metaphysics, and handled these intelligently, but rather because these subjects interested others, and what interested those she loved was interesting to her. Hers was one of those genial natures which receive from others, and render back to them, many impressions. She had been brought up at home, by a father who was not only an active merchant but a classical scholar, and by a mother who united accomplishments with literary tastes. Under such training, in a house the resort of cultivated society, the young mind was developed; and when, at the age of twelve, she was sent to visit Miss Seward at Lichfield (a minor star, who had kept up in that town its literary reputation),

she was able to appreciate, and detail to her mother, the conversation of Dr. Darwin, and the ideas of the clever circle which surrounded him. This, however, was not the only circle into which, in her youth, she was thrown. From Miss Seward's brilliant but somewhat eccentric society, she often passed into a less stimulating but more healthy atmosphere. She was a guest under Gisborne's kindly roof, and was introduced there to the delightful companionship which Wilberforce and Babington brought with them. Thence she passed to the easy circle of Rothley Temple, where, repairing as a guest, she soon became a friend; and her departure was mourned by every one, from the studious host down to the child whose affections she had gained and the nurse whose jealousy she had disarmed. "Do not think," writes Mrs. Babington to her on her departure, "that I mean to flatter when I say that very few people have left this house since I came into it whose absence has occasioned so great a chasm as yours." These events occurred in 1792, but two years before there crossed her path an incident which was to exercise a lasting influence on her life.

The resorts to which in these days, when German waters were unknown or inaccessible, English doctors used to send their patients, were Bath and Buxton. To Bath, Horace Walpole, Pitt, Burke, Wilberforce, frequently resorted. Buxton had its share of favour. Dr. Hey, then a medical man of repute at Leeds, the warm friend and admirer of Wilberforce, urged him, in 1789, to repair his shattered strength by

a visit to the Buxton waters. There accordingly Wilberforce went, and Henry Thornton accompanied him. Under the same advice they returned in the following summer, in July, 1790, as soon as they could escape from the Parliamentary business of London. Arrived at Buxton, they met with Dr. Hey, and entered with their usual ardour into some of his schemes of Yorkshire philanthropy. About the same time, sent on the like errand of health, arrived Mr. Daniel Sykes and his sister, from Hull. With Wilberforce they had been long united; they were among his earliest friends; they had long regarded and treated him as a brother. Under such circumstances, Henry Thornton naturally passed into a rapid intimacy with these new acquaintances. The acquaintance thus formed led to results—on the one side, to conversations which, among other themes, touching on religion, lastingly impressed the younger and more susceptible mind; on the other side, they produced an attachment which, then begun and afterwards renewed, led finally, in the spring of 1796, to a marriage which satisfied the wishes and removed the anxieties of the thankful father.

No douht, like all human things, this prospect was darkened by trial, for the brightest sunshine draws after it from the earth clouds and showers. Feelings so acute, affections so strong, as those which the happy wife brought to her new home, were allied with a constitution of fragile mechanism. Frequent attacks marked the delicacy of chest; severe headaches crushed her with heavy blows. But these trials were, by her at least, not unlooked for; for

she had felt them often, and she bore them bravely. But another trial came upon her, for which she was unprepared. Outwardly Henry Thornton appeared vigorous, but in truth his constitution was infirm from early life, almost as delicate as that of Wilberforce. A mind eminently active was enclosed in a body subject to almost constant disorders. This anxiety fell upon the wife from early married days. It hung over her like a black cloud, small at first, but it grew and spread till it darkened the horizon. To him, indeed, frequent sickness caused little annoyance. Writing to his friend Hannah More, he numbers among his mercies that his illnesses were neither painful nor disabling; and, now that he had found a congenial companion, his pains were lightened and his pleasures enhanced. After the trial of many years, he expressed his views to a young friend who was about to choose a wife, and told him the qualities he should seek. "Piety and kindness, these are the qualities which contribute the true soft green of life."

No doubt his labours needed the relief of a sympathy which could share them; for his life was one of unintermitting toil. We have spoken of his parliamentary work, and in this his activity became every year greater as he was better known, till, in the later years of his life, there were few Committees on finance, or taxes, or public economy, on which we do not find his name. When we add to these parliamentary labours the claims of his constituency, their local requirements, letters, memorials, private exigencies, and public deputations,—when we reckon up the weeks of work which his

infant colony of Sierra Leone cost him,—we can see how he toiled. To these labours are to be added his occupations as a banker, for of the bank he was an active partner; and his life was cast in a period of our commercial history the most critical which British trade has ever undergone. This business occuped his time and interrupted his few intervals of leisure. It brought him almost daily to the City, broke his holidays, and forced him to London from Bath, Brighton, or the Isle of Wight. It left him few and uncertain seasons either for research or reflection. No doubt, as his parliamentary work grew, this encroached somewhat on his banking efforts; and the business of a banker, which demands constant supervision, suffered from this diversion of his time. But this was not leisure, but only a change of work, the substitution of one class of employment for another more absorbing. A glimpse of these labours will suffice. Take the years about 1810, years of hot political conflict, and trace their effects on the life of a private member. Fierce debates on Burdett's Letter, and his committal to the Tower; eager struggles on Bankes's motion on Sinecures, in which the economists beat Percival's government; renewed debates on the Catholic Question, lighted up by Grattan's eccentric and exciting eloquence; long deliberations in the Bullion Committee, in which Horner and Henry Thornton carried their motions against Government by 11 to 4. In these engagements days and weeks slipped away, leaving no time for leisure or pauses from toil, to enjoy his fragrant and sheltered garden at Battersea Rise.

Meanwhile, thus engrossed by politics, he wields

his pen; and when we turn to his literary efforts, we are greatly surprised. During his lifetime he published a work on Paper Credit, which was admitted to be of high authority; and this work was only one of many. He wrote as much as most men do who have health and abundant leisure. He seized every fragment of time; wrote after his days of canvassing in Southwark, or after his work at the bank, or while engaged in the construction of his colony; in evenings when he was solitary in King's Arms Yard, or, when his family were absent, at Battersea Rise. He jotted down his thoughts in his carriage as he travelled, even on horseback as he rode; and the results of this industrious application are before us. Faithful to his memory, Sir Robert Inglis gave to the world an octavo volume of his Commentaries on the Old Testament and the New; written, indeed, for his family, and used in his domestic worship, but thoughtful, pointed, well worthy to be preserved. His volume of Prayers is known to many of us, and has passed through many editions. Another volume, published after his death, on Three Female Characters, resembles, in its truthfulness and power of delineation, the writings of Hannah More; and this volume introduces us to a department of his literary labours which began early, and was continued to the last. He it was who joined in setting up the Christian Observer, and did more, by his co-operation, to promote it, than any living man, except its editor. Bowdler contributed to it essays of greater length and research; but when we consider that the published volume on Female Character

represents *seven* articles in the Christian Observer, and that, in addition to these, Henry Thornton contributed during his life *seventy-five* others (making in all eighty-two), we shall form some idea how active was his pen. Nor is the range of subjects chosen by him narrow, or their handling commonplace. They, indeed, all fall under two heads —the moral, and the political: sketches of public affairs, of the state of parties in the stormy times of 1803, 1806, 1810, and 1813; the difficult question of the Orders in Council, and the Middlesex election; biographies of Pitt and of Fox, written with the thoughtfulness as well as the impartiality of history, critiques on the Edinburgh Review, on books, on the temper of religious parties, are interspersed with advice as wise as Addison's, less playful but more sound. And all this work was done by a busy politician and banker, through the orderly application of time and thought. Never hurried, but never idle; never harassed, but never resting; moments caught up as well as hours; the workman ever working cheerily under a Father's gracious eye. His rest was to turn from one labour to a different one—to go from the bank to a council of benevolence—from a political discussion to a struggling colony or a school in difficulties. He lays down the pen of the financier to take up the pen of the philanthropist—to write long letters to a harassed governor—to settle differences among contending missionaries—to snatch an interval from a dull witness before a parliamentary committee, in order to write letters or compose tracts for Hannah

More. The comforts he offers to her he took to himself. "If you should sink in the midst of your work, it will be better than sinking, like Bonaparte, in the midst of the Egyptian sands, or in that Holy Land which he may have to traverse. My wife and I have lately observed, and agreed much in the observation, how much happier and better entitled to comfort are they who, towards the close of life, have to look back on scenes of activity, than they who have only been talking and feeling religiously all their days." This thought cheered him through life's labours. His health failed often. Two continuous nights of unbroken rest he rarely knew. Medical care he constantly needed. He had often attacks of severe illness, but these did not discompose him. He rose above them, and renewed his labours. The state of his health drove him from London to recruit his strength at Bath or Brighton; for to the hurry of a London life his constitution was quite unequal. But he never thought of remitting, hardly of relaxing, his labours. He realized the poet's dream:—

"Work, for it is a noble thing,
With a worthy end in view,
To tread the path that God ordains
With steadfast hearts and true.
That will not quail, whate'er betide,
But bravely bear us through.

* * * *

"Work, and with cheerful, earnest hearts
Fulfil the high behest,
For in a busy world like ours
There is no place of rest;
And think not they who vainly dream
Their lives away are blest."

To him, indeed, the home at Battersea Rise, to which he repaired from the noise of King's Arms Yard, or, in later days, from the political whirl of Palace Yard, when he had relieved Wilberforce of his house, was no place of frivolous leisure. The sheltered garden behind, with its arbeil trees and elms and Scotch firs, as it lay so still, with its close-shaven lawn, looked gay on a May afternoon; when groups of young and old seated themselves under the shade of the trees or were scattered over the grounds. Matrons of households were there, who had strolled in to enjoy a social meeting; and their children busied themselves in sports with a youthful glee, which was cheered, not checked, by the presence of the elders. For neighbourly hospitality and easy friendship were features of that family life. Presently, streaming from adjoining villas or crossing the common, appeared others who, like Henry Thornton, had spent an occupied day in town, and now resorted to this well-known garden to gather up their families and enjoy a pleasant hour. Hannah More is there, with her sparkling talk; and the benevolent Patty, the delight of young and old; and the long-faced, blue-eyed Scotchman, with his fixed, calm look, unchanging as an aloe tree, known as the Indian Director, one of the kings of Leadenhall Street; and the gentle Thane, Lord Teignmouth, whose easy talk flowed on, like a southern brook, with a sort of drowsy murmur; and Macaulay stands by listening, silent, with hanging eyebrows; and Babington, in blue coat, dropping weighty words with husky voice; and young listeners, start-

ing into life, who draw round the thoughtful host, and gather up his words—the young Grants, and young Stephen, and Copley, a "very clever young lawyer." They handle many points, and give forth their views—themes for the Academy—on science and philosophy, at times on practical policy, bullion and currency, and sinecures and reforms; grave questions of polity, the Orders in Council, Napoleon's threats, the pressure on our blockaded shores, the young Chancellor of the Exchequer's first Budget speech, and the brightening hopes of the Abolition cause; the ministry of the Talents, will they stand? Windham's crotchets, and Grey's acuteness, and Lord Grenville's stately reserve. But whilst these things are talked of in the shade, and the knot of wise men draw close together, in darts the member for Yorkshire from the green fields to the south, like a sunbeam into a shady room, and the faces of the old brighten, and the children clap their hands with joy. He joins the group of the elders, catches up a thread of their talk, dashes off a bright remark, pours a ray of happy illumination, and for a few moments seems as wise, as thoughtful, and as constant as themselves. But this dream will not last, and these watchful young eyes know it. They remember that he is as restless as they are, as fond of fun and movement. So, on the first youthful challenge, away flies the volatile statesman. A bunch of flowers, a ball, is thrown in sport, and away dash, in joyous rivalry, the children and the philanthropist. Law and statesmanship forgotten, he is the gayest child of them all.

But presently, when the group has broken up, and the friends have gone to their homes, the circle under Henry Thornton's roof gathers for its evening talk. In the Oval Library, which Pitt planned, niched and fringed all round with books, looking out on the pleasant lawn, they meet for their more sustained conversation. In this easy intercourse even the shy Gisborne opens himself. At times the talk is interspersed with reading, the books chosen by the host—a curious choice, significant of a thoughtful mind; now an Essay of Foster's, lately published; now, anticipating Lord Derby, he reads to the circle a book of the Iliad; now, some Essays of Bacon; or —singular selection—a portion of Aristotle's Ethics; or he and Gisborne read by turns one of Wilberforce's brilliant orations. Or they vary their summer evenings by strolling through the fresh green fields into the wilder shrubbery which encloses Mr. Wilberforce's demesne: Broomfield, not like Battersea Rise, with trim parterres and close-mown lawn, but unkempt—a picture of stray genius and irregular thoughts. As they pass near the windows that look out on the north, and admire the old elms that shade the slopes to the stream, the kindly host hears their voices, and runs out with his welcome. So they are led into that charmed circle, and find there the portly Dean (Milner), with his stentorian voice, and the eager Stephen, Admiral Gambier and his wife, and the good Bishop Porteus, who has come from Fulham to see his old friends, the Mores. Another evening the party cross the common, and drop into the villa of the Teignmouths, or spend a pleasant hour in

Robert Thornton's decorated grounds, to look into his conservatory full of rare plants, and his library with its costly volumes. On Sunday they take their seats in the old church, with the Wilberforces' and Macaulays' and Stephens' pews close to their own, and in the front gallery the Teignmouths; and they listen to the wise discourses of Venn: another Sunday they sit enchanted under the preaching of Gisborne. All round this home, gathered by the loadstone of kindness, are settled friends who make up a large circle; friends from all quarters of the earth, drawn here by sympathy, and finding a rural retreat in that which then held a scattered population of 5000, but is now swelled to six times its size.

CHAPTER XVI.

FRIENDS OF HENRY THORNTON: THE GRANTS; LORD TEIGNMOUTH; THE CLAPHAM PASTORS.

Of some of these friends, forming the inner circle, we must for a moment speak. Nearest to them, separated by a hedge, but blended by close community of tastes, was the family whom Henry Thornton had placed at the villa nearest his own. Though Charles Grant had passed part of his life in India, and had settled in England after many years of Oriental toil, there was in his strong character, and the sturdiness of his unflinching integrity, that which suited well the views of Henry Thornton. They soon learned to esteem each other, and esteem passed rapidly into regard. Both were men of energy, both fond of work, both after a time members of Parliament, both resolute to turn to account their influence, and both, whether they differed or agreed, liking to know the other's thoughts, for they felt they would hear in these the utterances of a bold and honest mind.

Mr. Grant, indeed, on his return to England, directed his chief attention, as was natural, to the concerns of our Indian Empire; for in India he had spent his most active years; in India

he had gathered the modest fortune which gave him competency; to India he owed his position in England, his seat as a Director, and his seat in Parliament. He was a Director, not in the later days which we have known, when the shadows were falling thick over Leadenhall Street, and, though the Senate still met, the Capitol was crumbling under the feet of the senators; but in the palmy days, when the Directors sat in their curule chairs, merchant princes, with sceptres of ivory and gold, sending forth their missives to proconsuls in the East, to restrain the lofty ambition of Wellesley, to sanction the warlike decisions of Hastings, to satisfy or blight the projects of Cornwallis or Minto; wielding patronage which ministers of state might well envy; for in their antechambers peers and commoners stood, humble petitioners, to gather the crumbs from their full table. To this great empire of English influence and dominion the Directors had risen, step by step, through opportunities, years, and conquests, till they held in their hands dominion vast as the ambition of Napoleon could seek, which included race after race, subjugated nation after nation, and had at length swelled to dimensions that recalled the dream and surpassed the deeds of Alexander. This empire had begun in a few petty forts, the counting-houses of some obscure supercargoes on the Hooghly; but it spread itself, by a law inexorable as destiny, from the Ganges to the Indus, and from the southern cape, buffeted by the Indian waves, to the snow mountains which fenced off the ancient kingdom of Aurungzebe from

the land of Thibet and the empire of China. Of this vast dominion, at the time of which we speak, the East India Directors were the lords; and among this Venetian oligarchy Charles Grant was at once the ablest and the most influential ruler. He had attained his high position, not by interest or connexion or wealth, but by rare habits of business, by a strong will and a bold integrity. These forced a way for his purposes over all forms of opposition, and made him, in a council-chamber of masters, where all were equal and independent, the lord paramount over weaker minds. When therefore Wilberforce, settling his plans with Henry Thornton, turned his eyes to the East, and resolved to drop into our Indian empire, then lying waste and given up to superstition, the germ of Christianity, he turned to Charles Grant as his counsellor and helper. Indeed, without the help of such a man, it may be safely said that his plans would have failed, and the step gained in the Charter of 1813 might have been postponed for many years. Before such assistance, however, difficulties disappeared; and the iron will and unbending purpose of Grant, combined with the judgment of Henry Thornton and the persuasive eloquence of Wilberforce, prevailed over a host of obstacles. From the time, therefore, that Charles Grant settled at Battersea Rise, he became the counsellor of both the friends; and henceforth upon every public question the inner cabinet consisted of these three remarkable men.

Domestic circumstances followed to strengthen the public tie. For when the marriage of Henry

Thornton brought a female head to the household, the alliance of the two houses was cemented by the intimacy which sprung up between the ladies who presided over them. To the elder matron, the mother of a large family, and of long experience, the younger wife naturally turned. And, truly, less susceptible dispositions would have been won by the character of Mrs. Grant. Married in India, having passed in that tropical climate many of her most impressible years, a character naturally gentle seemed to have been mellowed into special tenderness under those eastern suns; so that when she left India, and passed into our colder and sterner society, she brought, in her manner, looks, and sentiments, something of that sensitive delicacy which belongs to plants nursed into luxuriant growth under the heat of southern suns. The voice soft and low, the manner quiet and retiring; the dress itself, the veil thrown over the head, and falling down in folds over the figure, were all in keeping with that veiled modesty and gentle purity. In the household, over which she was placed, the ostensible ruler was no doubt the man of strong will whom we have sketched, and whose slightest word was law. But while the reins of government were held fast in his hands, the formation of the character of the children lay chiefly with the mother; for she ruled by love, and thus her sway was unconscious and irresistible, and her example moulded, by insensible impression, the thoughts and sentiments of all around her. So it came to pass that the characters of the children, while they inherited much of the talent

and powerful intellect of the father, reflected, in their refined tastes and their exquisite but, over-fastidious sensitiveness, the exotic temperament of the mother. It was natural that any young mother, placed in close neighbourhood with such a mind, should have yielded herself to her influence; much more one who, like Mrs. Henry Thornton, partook of the same sensibilities and the same quick and refined feelings. Hence it was that the two matrons became fast friends, and in every circumstance of life, in trouble, or languor, or sickness, Mrs. Henry Thornton turned to Mrs. Grant as her counsellor. And, in truth, the delight of the elder matron was to answer the appeal; for whenever distress came, when care entered to break the rest or wrinkle the brow, when the wife was anxious or the mother embarrassed, Mrs. Grant appeared, a prompt friend; and as soon as the gentle face was seen, the clouds began to break, and streaks of light dimpled the sky. Equally comforting she was to the depressed mother, when she sat by her sofa, drew forth the causes of her anxiety, and whispered words of encouragement; or when her noiseless step passed, like a vision, along the nursery floor, and she sat herself down by the bedside of some wakeful child, soothed her fretfulness, and lulled her into slumber with the tones of her voice and the verses of a hymn. Thus the troubles of life only drew the households together; and even, after the Grants removed to London, the intercourse remained undisturbed. Whatever touched the Director's house, sad events or glad, Mrs. Thornton was the first to hear the tidings. When she wanted companions, she drew

them from that household. And when her own great sorrow came, the same friend was still by her at Kensington Gore, to soothe her in her hour of desolation; and when she too drooped, Mrs. Grant was still beside her sofa to whisper words of comfort, and to cheer the patient sufferer, as she glided from earth, which had lost its sunlight, to pass, through a merciful decline, into the world which has neither cloud nor care.

But not only were the elders of the Grant household intimate with Henry Thornton and his wife: other companionships grew up around them from the younger branches of the family. For the children in their turn felt for the hostess of Battersea Rise much of that clinging affection she entertained for Mrs. Grant. When the daughters were weary of London excitement, they resorted for rest to this second home; and when the sons, overworked at Cambridge, or fatigued in public life, sought to recruit their strength, they knew that a cordial welcome awaited them in the home at Battersea Rise. Thus, while they themselves benefitted, they brought the attractions of their gifts, and these were manifold. For if the sensibility, which they inherited, was for the rough work of life a hinderance, it added to social intercourse an inexpressible charm. Nursed, as they had been, in a home atmosphere, where every sentiment was refined, they shrank, with an almost morbid recoil, from the contact of ordinary minds, but they drew the more closely to that charmed circle of Battersea Rise, in which intellect and taste were found combined.

Of the young men who thus contributed their genius and accomplishments to this society, we may speak freely, as their names are public words, written in our annals: one known for his statesman-like eloquence in the House of Commons, Secretary for Ireland, then Secretary for the Colonies, now a peer; the other distinguished as a public speaker, the writer of sacred poetry, universally admired—too early taken from us, when he left us to govern one of our East India provinces (Bombay). But of the other members of the family we must say but little; as the sacredness of domestic life is apt to wither even under the breath of praise. This at least may be said, that their society brought with it a charm deeply felt by her who presided as the hostess. Of one of them Mrs. Thornton used to say, that her conversation was a more reviving cordial than a tonic spring. She exercised over the young, who entered her society, a witchery of indescribable power, and in her Madame de Staël saw the realisation of that poetical vision which was embodied in the character of Corinne. Another daughter has been described in lines written on her by Bowdler, which record the impressions made by her youthful charms; recalled mournfully, now that we contrast the brilliant dawn of a hopeful life with its evening setting behind clouds, on darkened eyes, after years of trouble:—

"Thine are youth and beauty now,
Friends and lovers round thee bending,
Hope sits smiling on thy brow,
Hope with joy her triumph blending;

Thy blue eye is speaking pleasure,
Gladness bids thy bosom swell.
Is then life so rich a treasure?
Dearest maiden, use it well."

From this family we pass to speak of another which added its quota to the circle of Battersea Rise. At no great distance across the Common, Lord Teignmouth, after his return from India, had fixed his home; and there, while his children were growing up, he resided. Lord Teignmouth impressed those who saw him for the first time with some feelings of disappointment. When they found themselves in his society, and noticed his mild but inexpressive countenance, and his somewhat phlegmatic manner, they could hardly bring themselves to believe that the plain-looking gentleman, who drew his chair near you and chatted with unpretending talk, had been Governor-General of India, and had occupied the seat once filled by Lord Cornwallis and Lord Clive. You were the more surprised when you learned that he owed this elevation to his own merits. Starting in early life, the son of a respectable merchant, enjoying only a plain commercial education, he had gone, as many did, to India to push his fortune. Without patrons or prospects, the unassisted youth rose to eminence. Yet his was a case of advancement not gained by genius, or extraordinary talent, or rare opportunities, or an unlooked-for stroke of fortune: it was earned in the quiet course of common duties, by the conscientious performance of enjoined service. Having become a competent linguist in the languages of

the East, he had fitted himself for any work given him to do, and he did it diligently and well. Useful at the desk, careful as a collector, intelligent as a judge, and upright as well as clear in his decisions, he approved himself to his various chiefs through the successive steps of the public service; till at last his merits attracted the notice of the Governor-General, Warren Hastings. When that able man desired to ascertain the financial resources of Bengal, he found no one more qualified to sift these, and explain them, than Mr. Shore; and, testing in this department his accuracy and diligence, he turned to him when grave and complex charges were brought against himself. Assisted in this critical work by his hearty exertions, he rewarded this important service by a seat in the Supreme Council; and the Directors, learning his value, confirmed the appointment. When Warren Hastings had ceased to rule, and the fierce party conflict in England was over, a new settlement of Indian affairs was in its course; and Pitt, deprived of his brother-in-law (for whom he had destined the post), was casting about with Dundas for some wary hand to whom to entrust the reins of government. None appeared to them more likely to command success than the prudent Mr. Shore, and him they therefore chose as Governor-General.

The unambitious Governor ruled India, as he ruled himself, by principles of justice and truth. He sought to win native confidence, and to reconcile the conquered races, by an administration considerate and mild; and during the four years of his government, no outbreak occurred to disturb his

schemes. How far these principles of government would have stood the test, is doubtful,—doubtful if the fierce Rohillas, or wild Mahrattas, would have long submitted to a rule which, if they did not learn to fear, they would have soon begun to despise. For even during these years of quiet, complaints and disaffection were found, and the causes were rife on all sides, which eventually led to war.

But happily for Mr. Shore, before war broke out he was released; and returning to England, his diligent service was rewarded by an Irish peerage.

Settled in England, he gave himself to the pursuits of peace, which were always congenial to him, and he entered on that sphere of private and domestic duties to which his tastes and temper inclined him. Fixing after a time his residence at Clapham, he addressed himself to the useful activities which lie open to a busy magistrate, and was soon nominated Vice-Lieutenant of Surrey. In that post, nominal in peace, but important in times of danger, he found the south of England struck with alarm at the contemplated invasion, and the threatening preparations of Napoleon. In the efforts made by the voluntary zeal of the country to guard against attack, Lord Teignmouth took a zealous part. He raised a corps of volunteers, which amounted in 1805 to 8000; and, assisted by his neighbour, Mr. Henry Thornton, he drilled and commanded them. He drew the chief of the residents of Clapham into his circle; and, inducing them for a time to interrupt the engrossing cares of mercantile or political life, he prevailed on them to officer his corps.

Nor was he without employment in the arts of peace. His knowledge of India, its circumstances and its jurisprudence, made him a valuable addition to the Judicial branch of the Privy Council; and at the Cockpit, with Sir William Grant and Sir John Nicholls, he sat greatly esteemed. Even the decisions of these distinguished lawyers had, in the acute eyes of Romilly and Stephen, who pleaded before them, fresh authority when corroborated by Lord Teignmouth's long experience and dispassionate judgment.

He was also appealed to by Parliament on questions relating to India, and, at the crisis of the struggle on the question of introducing Christianity into India, Lord Teignmouth's evidence was taken before the House of Commons, and produced a strong impression. On this subject, he gave his views in detail in a pamphlet which he published. This alone would have led to intimacy with Wilberforce and Henry Thornton; but before that time, neighbourhood and congenial feelings had produced a close acquaintance.

Both the elder and younger members of his family were frequent guests at Battersea Rise. Nor was this to be wondered at; for if ever goodness and meekness shone forth in a public man, they were found in Lord Teignmouth; as happy in the modest walk of his unpretending benevolence, when he took part in the rising society in Earl Street, as he had been when he guided the counsels of the great empire of India; as full of zest, when he seated himself in the Clapham coach, with his umbrella by his side, as when he rolled in the pomp of sove-

reignty through the streets of Calcutta. His benign worth made a strong impression on all who saw him; while his partner added to the vivacity, so attractive in a woman, a quaint originality of thought, accompanied with a playful kindness. The younger members grew up with their cotemporaries to share their pursuits and prospects.

To us, indeed, the picture of that household comes, not as it showed itself to the Thorntons in its morning prime, but as we recall it touched by the shadows of the declining light which fell in later days on the hospitable house in Portman Square. For by that time the circle was not unbroken, and its strength was impaired. One of the sons had passed away into Eastern exile, another was laid to rest in a foreign grave. The venerable host was bending under the weight of seventy summers, the voice more slow, the step more feeble; but in his placid looks goodness and peace reigned, and worth cast its radiance on the evening of a useful life. Lord Teignmouth had been summoned, by the respect of a large body of religious philanthropists, to preside over one of those great societies which have made an epoch in the philanthropy of England, and have left a permanent mark on the character of mankind. He had given himself to the counsels of the Bible Society with a patient assiduity, and watched with patriarchal interest over its daily administration. Not possessed of the gifts which dazzle society, not able by eloquence to stimulate large assemblies, he was eminently fitted by his gentleness and judgment for the effective guidance of practical counsels. In

this respect the Society profited much by his advice and experience. He was its first president; as Henry Thornton was its first treasurer.

Even now we recall, with something of the faintness of a dream, those evenings in Portman Square, when, after the crowd and stir of an anniversary meeting, all that was notable in London in patriotism or philanthropy met in these hospitable rooms; when the old forms of men of mark, drooping under the weight of years, Wilberforce, and Lord Bexley, and Lord Sidmouth, were to be seen mingled with younger men rising into note, Sir Robert Inglis, and the Grants, and Sir Thomas Acland; bishops were there to represent the Church; sectaries of catholic spirit greeted bishops, anxious to forget their differences and to unite in thankful praise. These days have fled, the groups are gone, the halls, once so thronged, are silent. Here and there the footsteps of a solitary straggler wake, with the echoes of his feeble tread, mournful memories, and recall to us the band of which he is the solitary survivor; but those who witnessed this scene will understand what social interest, what harmony, what kindliness and worth, that household, in its earlier days, brought to Henry Thornton's happy home.

Still, as we review the circle gathered near Battersea Rise, our picture, to be true, must include the pastor, who brought his counsels to their families; taught them by his weekly lessons, and comforted them in times of trouble. In these respects Clapham was highly favoured, as both in John Venn,

and his successor Dr. Dealtry, the parishioners possessed clergymen characterised alike by zeal and by wisdom, presenting the special characteristics of their church—learning, earnestness, and a wise moderation. Both of these clergymen, during their incumbency, which extended over more than one generation, enjoyed the respect of their parishioners, and an influence greatly to be valued; not confined to weekly addresses, though enhanced by them, but springing out of the warmth of sympathy and the steadiness of friendship. In their teaching they resembled each other; firm in their adherence to the cardinal points of the ancient faith which the Church of England has inherited from early times, but alike opposed to the fluctuating fashions of modern theology, which at one time swells into unwholesome excitement, or shrivels into a dry and lifeless Deism; but they were withal moderate, gentle as those best can be who are strong; looking for success, not to excitement and emotion, but to the patient teaching of Divine truth, set forth with loving earnestness; seed, the germ of habits, dropped, with silent prayer for a blessing, into the cold stiff soil. This, the husbandry of their labours, was at once their duty and their delight. This teaching, acceptable to the thoughtful, not alluring or stimulating to the multitude, was greatly prized by Henry Thornton. No other style of thought would have suited his balanced judgment. It was by this process that his own mind had been formed—not by impulse or enthusiasm, but by the persevering study of the Divine Record, which offers grounds of cavil to the

doubting, and difficulties to the careless, but which, when honestly read and carried faithfully into practice, becomes to the humble Christian intelligible and clear.

This sort of character had given him a cast of thought which was his characteristic. Gentle in his judgment of others, tolerant of their differences, indulgent to their infirmities, only to himself unsparing, he gave, with an intrepid liberality, freely of his time and wealth to the cause of the poor, the sick, and the suffering—to the minutest cases of distress, as to the largest schemes of benevolence. In the latter sphere he always chose the hardest work and the most unobserved portion, and, setting aside the care of his health and all thought of ease, he did his work strenuously, hardly allowing his infirmities to relax or suspend it. Aware of his own weakness, and of the help he needed, he gave part of each of his occupied days to a careful study of Scripture, to reflection, and to prayer. Often he might be seen, in fellowship with his friend Bowdler, in the quiet library which looked out on the shaded lawn, taking the large Bible from the shelves, studying it with fixed attention, and extracting from it lessons for practice and for comfort.

The perseverance of his character, and the continuity of his labours, reminds us somewhat of the versatile activity of John Wesley. Seeking rest at Buxton, with flagging health and weakness, only interrupted by sharp attacks of fever, he plies his pen busily, and sends to Macaulay constant supplies. Later in life, as he is travelling for health, he is reading the new publications, and writing, for his

children or his household, simple prayers. Nor does failing health induce him to stop his works, or to abate his interest in them. It is true that these benevolent labours brought at times their refreshment. He lived to see the fruits in Africa* of his life-long toil. Before his death he was able to point out the results. A land once desolate, now cultivated by agriculturists; once a desert, then a population of 5000 souls; thriving farms occupied by industrious freemen, who had once been ignorant captives, and their labours covering with a flush of verdure an area of eight miles from Free Town.

These results, however, though they refreshed his spirit, were not the sources of his happiness. Happiness he found in religion—in the contemplation of the Divine character, and in the glorious prospects of a more elevated life. This reconciled him to the weakness of his constitution, and to the frequent infirmities which tried him; this made him spurn with a lofty disregard the vain pursuit of accumulating wealth, regarding its acquisition as valuable only inasmuch as it led to the help and relief of others.

* As some theorists deny that the African race is capable of improvement, and some statesmen (*mirabile dictu!*) have questioned the progress made, it is well to refer to the latest witness, Dr. Livingstone, who speaks in emphatic language of the agriculture, trade, and civilisation of the Africans of Sierra Leone; and better than any testimony is the incontrovertible fact, that in 1861, half a century after Henry Thornton's death, the population had risen to 41,000; the native Christians of Sierra Leone were 27,000, and showed their value for education and religion by supporting their schools at a charge of £800 a year, and their churches and missionaries at a cost of £10,000 a year. (Livingstone's Expedition to the Zambesi, 1865, p. 603.)

"For," he says, "I have discovered that there is a dignity and sterling value in religion which makes all the more common ills of life very tolerable, and renders wealth especially extremely mean, except for the sake of the beneficent uses to which it is convertible."

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. AND MRS. HENRY THORNTON.—THE CLOSE.

In the autumn of 1813, the household of Battersea Rise, and the larger circle of Clapham, were deprived of Mr. Venn. He was replaced by Dr. Dealtry, who to a remarkable extent filled the void that was occasioned. At this time, Henry Thornton, looking round at the growing activity of religious men, and the various schemes which they were pressing forward, could speak with increasing satisfaction of the progress of good. The only cloud on the horizon which his watchful eye could descry, was the publicity which had become necessary to keep up the various enterprises of philanthropy, the speeches and the excitement of public meetings, apt from their very nature to impair the bloom of a healthy and humble piety.

In the spring of 1814, the sudden close of the war spread through all circles a flush of joy, and restored to many the hope of prosperity. Apparently, there was nothing to cause anxiety to the household of Battersea Rise. The advent of peace had brought to the friends of Abolition fresh objects and an enlarged field of exertion; and in these labours Henry

Thornton took, as usual, an active part. "We have," he says, "some dark plots in our head for influencing the Allied Powers in favour of the abolition of the slave trade through this earth of ours, which earth the three or four potentates now at Paris, of whom Lord Castlereagh is one, seem to hold in their hands." The only alloy to his satisfaction was found in Wilberforce's weakness of health, and his loss of voice; so that the meetings of that spring were deprived of their chief orator. To his own state of health, even in his familiar correspondence with his old friend Hannah More, he scareely makes an allusion; though his infirmities were increasing, and in the autumn his health began decidedly to fail. So frequent, however, through life had been his ailments, that his illness did not at first excite any special alarm, either among his large circle of friends, or in his own family, from whom in the latter part of the autumn he was separated. To his family he wrote with his accustomed playfulness, always making the best of everything, looking rather on the compensating mercies which Providence granted, than on the sorrowful circumstances of a man's lot.

In the latter part of October his illness became more serious, and he resorted to further medical advice. At length the signs of disease became so distinct as to bring his anxious wife to his side; and after a few weeks he was removed from his house in Palace Yard to Mr. Wilberforce's house at Kensington Gore, which his old friend gladly placed at his disposal, in the hope that a purer air and greater quietness might allay the fever which

was reducing him. At the first notice that his illness was serious, a large circle of anxious friends gathered to his house with constant inquiries. Bowdler, who had nursed him with tender assiduity during his wife's absence, came constantly to read to him and to converse with him. His true and tried friend Wilberforce was often with him; and all the bustle and perturbed stir of his wonted activity was laid aside, as he sat in the sick room, entered with the tenderest sympathy into his friend's state, and with softened voice and noiseless step visited him and whispered to him words of comfort. His younger friends were no less assiduous. Robert Grant repeated to him the hymns with which his pen had just enriched our literature; and some of the striking prose writings, which Mr. R. Grant contributed to the Christian Observer, were read to him by Bowdler, and dwelt upon by him with great delight. In a review of Pascal, Robert Grant had written,—"Religion does not wholly clear the moral mysteries with which man is surrounded, but gives him a solemn and ever-deepening repose." That repose, as his friends saw, Henry Thornton enjoyed; and in the midst of extreme irritation, occasioned by disease in the nerves of the stomach, the cough and fever which ensued, and the languor which increased, he found in the Bible (especially in the 11th of Hebrews) a quietness, founded on God's promises, which led him to rest with childlike confidence on their fulfilment. The last prayer which he wrote expressed the feelings that now filled his mind:—"When the shadows of the evening fall around us, and when age and sickness

shall arrive, and human help shall fail, be then Thou, O Lord, the strength of our hearts, and our portion for evermore."

He had at times the refreshment of Dr. Dealtry's elevating prayers, and Bowdler's sunny piety was constantly ministering to his comfort. In all that concerned his friends, in the interests of the church in which he had so long sat, in the schemes of philanthropy which he had shared, he continued to the last to take an interest. Indeed, his mind was so perfectly unclouded, that the friends, who sat by him and heard his reflecting remarks, could scarcely bring themselves to believe that the body was breaking up in which the spirit was so unbroken and serene. His faithful medical attendant, Pennington, with a mingled feeling of admiration and affection, struggled against the disease with every appliance of his consummate skill, and exclaimed—"I wish I could save him: he is such a subject for medical treatment—a mind so well regulated, that it never retards the cure for one moment." His eminent physicians, Sir Henry Halford and Dr. Baillie, could not bring themselves to believe that the attack would terminate fatally; for, as the disease was functional, not organic, they hoped that a change would come, and, as soon as the functional disorder ceased, strength would return. At every lull of the paroxysms of pain, or intervals of ease, the sanguine nature of Wilberforce caught eagerly at the hope, and relied to the last on his recovery. He himself took from the outset an unfavourable view. He was persuaded that the disease would be

fatal, and under that conviction he made his preparations. He arranged his temporal affairs with the tenderest concern for his wife and children: he dismissed, by a strong effort of his vigorous mind, the anxieties which had oppressed him both in his own concerns and those of a near relation. Undeluded by the momentary gleams which kindled others into hope, and which soothed at times the trembling solicitude of his wife, he prepared himself to die. "I am sure," he said to his medical friend, in one of his earlier visits, "you are doing all you can; and now let us talk of other matters." "He is more persuaded," said Pennington, "of a fatal termination than I am, and he talks of it far more calmly."

He dictated an addition to his Family Prayers, which showed what he felt, and where he rested; in this he sought an increase of his faith and patience, and God's presence with him to the end of his days. The impressions left upon Bowdler, at what proved their last parting, are contained in a letter which Bowdler wrote to Mr. Wilberforce:—"I can never be sufficiently thankful to God for having prolonged his life till I returned to him. I saw him on the Friday, and settled some worldly affairs for him; and I saw him again on Sunday evening, and the memory of that interview will long, very long, be dear to me. His deep humility under a sense of sin, his perfect trust in his Redeemer, his feeble voice, yet clear, unclouded intelligence, his depression under the weight of disease and suffering, yet his collectedness and unaffected resignation, was a sight for angels to behold, and I doubt not they did be-

hold it, and bless that Almighty Lord, who has subdued even sin and death!" When it was evident that his sufferings were near their termination, Pennington was requested by his family to carry to other sufferers the skill which was no longer available to him. But Pennington entreated to be allowed to remain, as never had he felt so deep an interest in any patient; and the lessons he had learnt in that sick room were such as he never could repay. By his dying bed was seated Mrs. Grant, of whom Bowdler had said, "She was so soft, so gentle, so unwearied, surely she was sent into the world to comfort the sick and the sorrowful." She whispered into his ear verses of sacred truth and bright hope. The venerable form of Mr. Grant was seen in the chamber of death, gazing with a softened tenderness on the dying countenance of one whom he had so long esteemed. The terms in which Bowdler, just after his death, described his character, supply an unexaggerated estimate:—"His influence," he said, "was great; his understanding of uncommon power: and what one fancied was a careless opinion, was often the result of such deep thought and patient investigation, as would have taken other people hours to express. I have often thought it was almost an evidence of the Christian religion, that so commanding a mind as his, prejudiced as it was in early life, by a methodistical circle in which he lived, against enthusiasm of all kinds, should quietly and soberly examine the subject for himself with all the force of his intellect, and end in becoming not only convinced of the truth of religion, but one of the most warm

and devout of her followers. How we are all to go on without him, I cannot understand: as a standard for us all to look up to, he was invaluable. Even this day, the first that has risen on his lifeless remains, I have wanted his counsel; and how many are there to whom his example gave confidence and guidance in their humble exertions—who leant on him, and looked to him in every season of doubt and temptation!"

The death of Henry Thornton was followed within a fortnight by the death of his dearest friend Bowdler; and thus Mrs. H. Thornton was deprived of the friend on whom, next to Wilberforce, she had most relied for counsel. She bore indeed this blow, as she bore her great bereavement, with uncomplaining submission. The sight of familiar places, the countenances and words of old friends, the memories of the past, did not appear to call up in her mind painful associations, or to intensify a sorrow which was too deep for tears. But in such a temperament, so formed mentally and physically, the silver cord which had bound indissolubly two lives, could not be broken without the frame of the survivor being shattered by the shock.

She sought, indeed, every alleviation; she followed the advice of her medical friend; she desired, for the sake of her children, to preserve her health. She obeyed implicitly the directions of her physician. There was no self-abandonment or despair in her sorrow; but, as the spring advanced and summer came, her strength, in spite of every effort, visibly declined. She tried, under Pennington's direction,

to change the scene; she went with her children on a visit to her loved friends at Barley Wood. But she carried about with her the grief of the stricken heart. Her shadowy unearthly look alarmed her watchful friends. Only when some of the younger children burst into the gaiety so natural to their years, did their merry laugh bring a smile on the faded countenance. She returned to Battersea Rise no ways improved. As the summer advanced, her strength declined more rapidly. Her interest indeed in others remained: in the joys and troubles of her friends she took a warm concern. They rewarded her by strong sympathy: the younger Grants, the younger Stephen, were eager to help and comfort her, as tender as her older friends. The rewards of her life of love appeared, and Mr. and Mrs. Inglis, having no family of their own, came to help her in the amusement and oversight of her large group of children.

Alarmed at her increasing illness, Pennington ordered her to Brighton. She would have preferred to be left in the home which was endeared to her by past thoughts and the peacefulness of its retirement—full of many recollections, fragrant with feelings more balmy than flowers. But she at once obeyed her doctor, and in September, slowly, and with great difficulty, she was removed to Brighton. She carried with her a few of the books which she had read so often with one who needed them no more, and they gave her comfort. A volume of Venn's sermons was often read to her; Mr. Dunn's sermon on "Our conversation is in heaven," was one of her cordials. Dr. Dealtry's

Sermons on the Revelations, and Baxter's "Saints' Rest," were read to her daily. One sentence of Mr. Dunn's cheered her: "What the world calls death, is but his recall by his gracious Prince, from this outpost of the world, where he carried on the war for a while, to be nearer his Royal person." But her greatest personal comfort was in the visits and words of Mr. Wilberforce. He came to her daily; he read the Bible to her; he prayed with her, and poured forth, in that voice of incomparable sweetness, the consolations of a Word which supports when all other support fails. He remained with her to the last—addressed earnest prayers for her to the Great Shepherd, that He would bear this tender one of His flock safely through the flood. He saw the answer, in a death painless and free from fear, the mind calm and cloudless, bright with happy thoughts, guarded, as by an invisible angel, from care, doubt, or gloom; she herself lay cradled in a childlike trust, sure that she was folded in the Eternal arms, and was passing safely to her enduring home. Mrs. Grant, her faithful friend, was also near her. At intervals, as she could bear it, she saw her children. The infant child of one of her dearest friends was frequently brought to her, and she delighted to look on the buoyant activity, which contrasted with her own sinking and ebbing life. Flowers were on her table, near her hand—genial gifts of a gracious God; she looked fondly at them, memories of the past, and was thankful. The moonlight streaming on the sea, the sound of the waves falling with lulling melody on the beach,

gave her great enjoyment. A few hours before her death her daughter read to her, at her own request, a beautiful sermon of Venn's, on "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" and her remarks in these last moments showed that her mind was clear and calm. On the 12th of October, 1815, with composure such as Mr. Wilberforce had never before witnessed in a dying person, Mrs. Henry Thornton sunk to her rest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR ROBERT HARRY INGLIS, BART., M.P. FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

ONE great solace of the last hours of Mrs. Henry Thornton, and one protection against anxious care, was supplied by the devotedness of two of her younger friends, who anticipated the wishes of her heart by undertaking, as the legacy of their disinterested affection, the charge of her nine orphan children. This circumstance, and the association which from this time arose between them and Mr. Wilberforce, makes it fitting that we should speak of one, long known and esteemed in public life—Sir Robert Harry Inglis, who well deserves, though of a younger generation, a place among Wilberforce's friends. We have before mentioned him as a friend of Bowdler, and we have quoted Bowdler's letter addressed to him. It is well that he should now occupy a separate niche; and that, giving the out lines of his family, and, as far as we can trace it, of his history, his life should receive in these records a short though very imperfect notice.

Robert Harry Inglis was born in London, on the 12th of January, 1786. He was the son of Sir Hugh Inglis, a Scotchman, born in 1744, at Rose-

burn, near Edinburgh. His father, the youngest son of a respectable family, had been sent, at the early age of sixteen, to seek, and make, his fortune. He pursued it with the adventurous spirit of a young Scotchman, in distant countries, in the South of Europe, then in North America, finally in the East Indies. From this country, the resort at that time of many Scotchmen, he returned with a moderate fortune, acquired without a stain. He was elected, in 1784, one of the East India Directors; and from that post, then so influential, he entered Parliament, as member for Ashburton, in 1802. He remained only four years in Parliament; but his connexion with the East India Company continued till 1813, when he occupied the Chair; and he then retired into private life, with health and powers unbroken, but with the feeling, as his son, writing the inscription for his monument, has piously expressed it, "that health and talents, when spared to the days of the years of man, ought to be unfettered by any employ which can interfere with the quiet preparation for another world; and meekly withdrawing from the bustle of active life, with a humility which in every station was his chief characteristic, he confined himself, in the bosom of his family, to the remaining duties of his station; and, in the single hope of acceptance through Jesus Christ, died, surrounded by his wife and children, the object of their respect and most grateful affection, on the 21st August, 1820."

In 1801 he was created a baronet; in 1784, he had married his first wife, Catherine Johnson, by whom he succeeded to the small property of Milton-

Bryant, in Bedfordshire; and from this marriage Robert Harry, along with two sisters, descended. The child of two parents alike estimable, Robert Harry grew up in a home which, though then presided over by Sir Hugh Inglis's second wife, was one of rare harmony and domestic affection. His stepmother and his sisters vied with each other in their affection for him, and continued to the last hour of their lives to revere him with a deep reverence. He has shown his affection for them by the words of the inscriptions which he wrote for their tombs. The boy was first placed at school with the Rev. Mr. Faithful, at Warfield, not far from Reading. From that preparatory school he went to Winchester; and with the Warden, Dr. Huntingford, he formed a friendship which continued till Dr. Huntingford's death when bishop of Gloucester. From Winchester he went to Christchurch, Oxford; and at Oxford he became acquainted with almost every undergraduate of his time, who was distinguished either for character or for talents. He then formed his close alliance with the fourteen persons (the Quatorze) who were the founders of the Grillon Club—a Club of which he continued the Secretary for thirty years. Among that number his most intimate friends at that time were Sir Thomas Dyke Acland and Sir James Riddell; and with these his friendship, drawn only closer as years passed, remained unabated to the end of life. In 1807, when he left Oxford, he married, on the 10th of February: and he then chose the Bar as his nominal profession, was called to it, but never practised.

Before this time, he had formed a friendship with Mr. Henry Addington, Lord Sidmouth's son; and this led subsequently to his connection with Lord Sidmouth, who was at that time in office. He had also become acquainted with Bowdler, who, in a letter written in March, 1806, speaks of him as a man "who, I suspect, possesses a heart and understanding considerably above the common level." In the autumn of the same year, Bowdler writes to him in the prospect of his marriage, observing to him that he was soon to enter on that state "which I might almost call, in the words of the poet, 'One little understood, our greatest evil or our greatest good.' To you, I trust, and doubt not, it will be the latter: but no truth is better worth the recollection of every man, in every station, than this—that Christianity is the real bond of union." After his marriage, Mr. Inglis and his wife lived for a time in his father's house in Soho Square, and presented (as one of his attached friends has described it) a picture of the most perfect family union. In the autumn of 1808, Bowdler visited the young pair at Milton-Bryant, and speaks of his visit there as affording him great delight in the retrospect, a witness of his friend's solid and enviable happiness; greatly struck with the qualities of his partner—"a simple cheerfulness and unaffected humility, which I never remember to have seen exceeded." Several years afterwards, we find Bowdler continuing his correspondence with Mr. Inglis, and showing him in confidence some of his verses.

But Bowdler was only one of his many friends;

for his kindly manners and genial character formed a host of friendships. About the year 1812, he was first introduced to the house of Henry Thornton. It was a characteristic of the reserved nature of Mr. H. Thornton, that, though he possessed none of the flowing courtesy and lively brilliancy of Wilberforce, he always took a deep interest in young men entering public life, whose future course he considered of so much importance to themselves and the country. Thus his intimacy began with Bowdler, though greatly his junior; thus he became the friend of the young Grants, and of young Stephen. Thus, when Sir Thomas Acland and Mr. Fazakerley entered Parliament for the first time, in 1812, they were welcomed to the easy hospitality of Mr. Thornton's circle in Palace Yard. And nearly at the same time, through Bowdler's introduction, Mr. Inglis and his wife passed into the same society.

When Mr. Henry Thornton's failing health drove his family to Kensington Gore, Mr. Inglis's kindness became exceedingly attractive to Mrs. Henry Thornton; and when, in her desolation, she retired to Battersea Rise, she was thankful to see two young persons, whose years and spirit were more in harmony with the age of her children, take an interest in them; she rejoiced to observe how they were welcomed by the young group, and how acceptable to them they became, when her failing health prevented her from taking an active part in their superintendence. Then, when she perceived how they, with a marked love of children, had none of their own, the thought occurred to her, that the young family, whom she was so soon to leave deso-

late orphans, might be committed to their care. And they, with a rare disinterestedness and courageous kindness, undertook the difficult task. Hence, on the death of Mrs. H. Thornton, in the autumn of 1815, the young couple settled in the house at Battersea Rise, and undertook the onerous charge of the nine orphan children. Those of us who remember Sir Robert Inglis in his later days, will hardly realize the slight figure and active form, which the painter has preserved on canvass, which made him enter freely into the active exercises of the young circle collected at Battersea Rise. Most persons would have prophesied that to undertake the charge of such a family, without the natural ties which maternal feeling and paternal authority confer, was in all cases hazardous: but if there was high spirit, talent, and buoyant energy, the experiment would prove a failure. That it was not a failure, is shown by unquestionable signs: not only by the affection, which began at the outset, and remained through life; not only by the respect with which their advice and opinions were always treated, and the eagerness with which every wish was met; but by this sign above all, that when the elder son, arriving at man's estate, was qualified, both by ability and fortune, to take up an independent position in the house which his father owned, he, voluntarily declining that post, preferred for twelve years to live, with filial duty, as a son, in the house where he might have ruled as a master; nor did any change take place till Sir Robert Inglis's own decision removed him, reluctantly to all concerned, at the epoch of Mr. Henry Thornton's mar-

riage, to the house in which he fixed himself in Bedford Square.

In the last year but one of Wilberforce's life, he recurs, in writing to one of the Thornton family, to his first acquaintance with the house at Battersea Rise, and to this passage, in its domestic history:—"How little did I think, when your dear father and I came to examine it, when it was tenanted by Gerard Hamilton, that it would not merely be the abode, till we married, of mutual friendly unity, of your dear father and myself; and, during all the remaining years of your father's and mother's lives, the seat of almost an unequalled treasure of friendly and Christian intercourse; but, above all, that it should be the place where the vile, low, detestable sayings of prudential narrowness of mind, concerning families of the number and in the circumstances of yours (Inglis's and Thornton's), should be utterly falsified; and where, after almost twenty years, instead of disagreement and heartburnings, there is augmented affection as well as esteem, and such unbroken harmony as to dispose all parties to continue friends together, when so plausible a pretext for a different arrangement had been afforded."

That familiar house on Battersea Rise had been characterized, in Henry Thornton's time, by a liberal hospitality. It became, under Sir Robert Inglis's direction, still more celebrated. It was the resort of every man of note and genius, who either dwelt in London or visited it. Poets and painters, sculptors and authors, divines and diplomatists, statesmen and members of Parliament, young men entering

into life, old statesmen who had seen the lapse of many generations of politicians, Presbyterian preachers famous for their eloquence, dignified prelates of stately orthodoxy, all frequented that familiar home. There might be seen travellers, who brought the latest news from Persia or Palestine, who had traversed the burning sands of Africa, or spent their winter among the icebergs of the Pole; enchanters from the North; wizards, of whom all men were talking; modest poets, buried in their northern retreat; the learned Southey, from the school of the Lakes; reviewers, who tore the Lake-poetry to pieces with merciless scorn; straight-laced Tories, who hated the name of Reform; and flaming Whigs, who advocated the boldest change. All met and enjoyed the good cheer provided for them in perfect harmony under the sunny smiles of their benignant host. Young men like Thomas Macaulay, and in later days Charles Buller, who were stepping into the ranks of the Liberal party, soon to rise to its foremost places, resorted with equal delight to the society of the Ultra-Tory, the Member for the University of Oxford, inheritor of its Tory traditions. Sturdy champions of Protestant principles, in whom Bankes saw the orthodox succession preserved, over whom Lord Kenyon and Lord Eldon joined their hands in delight, were to be seen at his table; but no less Mackintosh, and Charles Grant, and Hallam! while Lord John Russell, who advocated Catholic Emancipation as the cure of Ireland's diseases, and the Duke of Norfolk, who regarded it as the birthright of his faith, met there with Croker and Southey,

who wrote fiercely against the Catholic Claims, and with prelates who regarded Emancipation as the inlet of the deluge, and for the British constitution the beginning of the end. It was pleasant to see how, with every opinion cast in a different mould, with ideas of politics and literature as wide apart as the poles, the young Macaulay turned to Sir Robert Inglis with a respectful reverence, and, with a deference rare in him, paid to the man, whom he regarded, the homage of a son. It mattered not what principles or opinions characterized those who met under that roof, or severed them, through wide chasms of controversy, into strong divisions. They might be homœopathists, who renounced the allopathic heresy; or the Faculty, who denounced the homœopathists as quacks: they might be Tories, immovable in prejudice; or Liberals, bold in innovation; Evangelicals, who looked upon High-Church doctrines with horror; or High-Churchmen, who ran down Low-Church as Dissent; or the new school, who poured forth shot and shell against both, and raked the ranks of either party with hot philippics: they might be of the ancient school of reverential science, who sat, like Newton, at the feet of theology; or the new school, who held that they alone were the prophets, turned the earth upside down, and scoffed at theology with impatient scorn; they might be painters, who had jogged from youth in the beaten track, within the shafts and traces of the Academy; or the new school, who turned their backs on the old authorities, and professed to have first deciphered and represented nature: from that

pleasant circle none were shut out; and forgetting, in that glowing atmosphere of kindness, their freaks and feuds, they melted insensibly into regard, found out that in their rivals there was something to appreciate, and that the rough edges of opposite opinions, dovetailed together, might join in union. For all learnt, from the example of their host, how good it is to be at peace with our neighbour; how charity, like sunshine, melts as well as warms. Yet every one knew that, with all this charity on the part of their host, there was no compromise. His opinions were fixed as the rocks, down which torrents of innovation might run in vain. Settled on his own foundations, his views stood firm; no gust of fashion could move them. "There is no such thing now," we once said to him, "as a Tory." "I beg your pardon," was the answer; "I boast myself an uncompromising Tory." What he thought right, he said and did. But while he held his own ground, he allowed for the views of others, and admitted wide differences. Characteristic it was to see his mingled courtesy and firmness. If any one advanced a wrong sentiment, or hinted a sceptical sneer, he might rely on it that, sooner or later, he would stand reproved. Harsh sentiments of others, bitter sayings, slanderous stories, fled from before him. These might enter his company once, but not again. For if he forbore from a spoken reproof, his silence was eloquent. His gravity showed his annoyance, and checked a repetition of the fault. This instrument he wielded. It was one of the weapons of his influence used in Parliament, as he

used it in his domestic circle. In the latter sphere his influence was great, yet more from his life than his words. It was not genius that gave him the mastery, but goodness. Over a young and lively circle, not bound to him by natural ties, talent would not have availed; sharpness would have brought on sullenness, wit would have left a wound. Nor was there in him the brilliancy which dazzles the young, nor the vivacity which attracts, nor the quickness which subdues them. There was in his intellect a technicality, in his manners a formality, which suggests weakness rather than strength; a sort of Sir Charles Grandison politeness, which is apt to raise a smile. But though the young, if lively, are quick to catch at foibles, they are, if well conditioned, quick to discover good. And this characteristic they soon observed: his conscientiousness, his love of right, his fear of wrong; his restraint over himself, his consideration for others, and his loving kindness. They saw that for every sorrow he had a sympathy, and a helping hand for every trouble; that the only thing in which he could not restrain himself was a boundless liberality. So they aimed to do right, that by wrong-doing they might not give him pain; they could not bear to wound a heart at once so tender and so pure.

But those little knew, who saw him in his social hour, how bold he was when duty called him, how unbending. Two examples of this may suffice. Before the coronation of George IV., the Cabinet of Lord Liverpool was forced to consider what they should do if Queen Caroline presented herself for

admission into the Abbey, which they learnt was her purpose. They resolved to refuse her admittance; and, at the suggestion of Lord Sidmouth, they fixed on Sir Robert Inglis to meet her at the Abbey door, to intimate to her the decision of the Government, and to see it enforced. Lord Sidmouth assured them that there was no one in London who would do this so effectually, uniting so much courtesy with such firmness. Fully did he justify the opinion; for when the Queen alighted, Sir R. Inglis approached her, and told her, with a manner at once the most deferential and determined, that he had orders not to admit her, and that these orders must be obeyed. Having thus announced his purpose, he offered her his arm to conduct her back to her carriage, when she yielded and retired. The other occasion many will remember, as it occurred in the House of Commons. It was after the Reform Act had passed, when the new Parliament had met; and, after the heat of a long agitation, in the novelty of a new experiment, the heaving elements were still seething from the recent storm. Late at night, after a long debate, an old county member, a baronet, arose and amused the House by remarks which were dashed with a coarse buffoonery, bordering on profaneness. Such remarks, made offhand with a touch of piquant humour, are always sure, in a mixed assembly, to raise a thoughtless laugh. But the member for the University of Oxford rose, and, in the midst of "Ohs!" and shouts, and uproar, rebuked the offender and appealed to the chair. The feeling of the House was with the culprit; the Speaker was

silent; the impression ran strong against the interruption. Why this interference? The rebuke was needless, it was over precise, it was puritanical. But the rebuke told, and went home. The more men thought, the more they approved. They felt that the warning was needed—was timely as well as salutary; and it served, among a new audience, at the outset of their Parliamentary history, to check for the future the licentious outburst of coarse and profane remarks. Then, as men reflected, they began to admire; they felt that, among those six hundred men, there was probably not one who would have done as Sir R. Inglis did. Many would regret the allusion, but who would have rebuked it? Who was at once so prompt and so bold, with such a sense of duty and such courage, and the mingled courtesy and calmness that enabled him to chastise the offence and to hold his position?

What his intellectual gifts were, those who sat with him for many years in the House of Commons, and in committees of the House, can bear witness. He was not a man of eloquence; he had little imagination; his words were correct, his style was easy, but not remarkable. He had none of the quickness which causes surprises, none of the variety which gives a charm, nor of the novelty which abounds in happy illustration, nor the rich and pure Saxon vocabulary which supplies to some of our leading orators the materials of their power.* In these

* It is impossible to write these words without being reminded of Lord Derby's oratory.

points he was inferior; but he was of easy speech, of ready resource, and of a memory at once full and accurate. Those who thought, from the preciseness of his manner, that they might with impunity attack him, found out, sooner or later, their mistake. They often met a blow which staggered them, and was the more severe that it was unlooked for. Out of that beaming and benignant countenance there could come, ever and anon, vigorous sallies. We remember when Mr. Shiel, in the height of his celebrity, attacked, as was not unusual with him, the member for Oxford, and taunted him with his prudent silence on some of the religious controversies of the day. What was his opinion on the Tractarian dispute? Would he break silence, and tell them? But the prompt answer, with a request that Mr. Shiel would inform the House of his views on a controversy much older and of greater celebrity, that had long divided the Church of Rome, turned the laugh against the orator, and showed him that in the bland Tory he had met his match. Nor will his contemporaries soon forget how, in one of the Irish debates, O'Connell, attempting to relieve his Church of the burden which weighed upon her through her cruel treatment of Galileo, ventured on the ignorance of his audience, and made some statements, derived from fancy rather than history; but was on the instant brought to book, and shown to be hopelessly wrong in dates, in facts, even in the name of the Pope: supplying thus a proof, that, so long as Sir Robert Inglis sat in the House, no one could safely venture to misquote or misrepresent history.

During Sir Robert's residence at Battersea Rise, as the head of the Thornton family, after acting for a time as Lord Sidmouth's private secretary, (Lord Sidmouth being then and for many years in the Home Department, under Lord Liverpool's Government,) he obtained from the East India Company the lucrative post of Commissioner on a Commission to settle the affairs of the Carnatic; and many of us remember the rooms at the end of Manchester Buildings, in which he was generally to be found. In 1824, just as Wilberforce, warned by repeated and severe illness, was about to leave Parliament, while Canning was pursuing his brilliant course as leader of the House, Sir Robert Inglis entered Parliament for the Borough of Dundalk. By this time his father was dead, and he had succeeded to the Baronetcy. At Battersea Rise, after it had passed under the direction of Mr. Inglis, Wilberforce was a frequent guest. It was there, in 1817, that Southey first saw Wilberforce. And Mr. Inglis also was a frequent guest at Kensington Gore. The same year Wilberforce's Journal enumerates, as his visitors at breakfast, Inglis and Dr. Chalmers. He helps Wilberforce, in 1823, with some just remarks* on the pamphlet he was publishing. He was a visitor when the patriarch dwelt at Highwood Hill; and we find in Wilberforce's Journal, while the young Macaulay's fluent and fertile conversation is commented on with delight, Inglis, "extremely entertaining and most kind," receives honourable men-

* Life, vol. iv. p. 205.

tion. It was through his persuasion that Wilberforce was induced to sit for his picture to Mr. Richmond, whose genius was then rising into notice: at his table first the painter and the patriarch met, and the skill of the artist, drawn out by the qualities of Wilberforce's mind, triumphed (sure sign of genius) over physical difficulties, and has given us a portrait remarkable for its interest and truth.

From the borough of Dundalk Sir Robert Inglis was transferred, through the friendship of Vice-Chancellor Shadwell, to the borough of Ripon, then under the influence of Miss Lawrence; and in 1829, when Sir Robert Peel surrendered his seat for the University of Oxford, after introducing the Bill for Roman Catholic Emancipation, Inglis replaced Peel, after a severe contest. That contest afforded another example of his sunny temperament; for his most attached friend canvassed against him, and by so doing drew down some vehement expostulations from the affectionate circle of Battersea Rise; but from Sir Robert none. His friend was constantly with him, as dear as ever; came invited or uninvited, always welcome, to his hospitable table; and, without a shade of displeasure in Sir Robert's face, continued to report to him the progress of the canvass. From that time, the public life of Sir Robert Inglis, and his Parliamentary history till his retirement in 1859, are known to most of us. He represented the University of Oxford for nine Parliaments, and the Queen honoured his faithful loyalty by conferring on him, though never in office, the rank of Privy Councillor.

His position in Parliament throughout that period was peculiar. In party conflicts he took no interest. In the common movements of political circles he was not concerned. Even with the party, with which in the main he agreed, he declined to act. He refused, when urged, to take any part in those confidential communications, which are incidental and essential to party. A steady Protestant, he did not enroll himself as a member of any Protestant Association. When the Conservative party split asunder, he refused to join in the councils of the section to which his bias inclined him. He felt that circumstances had placed him in a peculiar position; that he represented a great literary and ecclesiastical confederation; and that, placed on this elevation, it was not desirable to descend into the common arena and mix in the dust and passions of partisans. But this did not make him unconcerned in any question which arose before Parliament; on almost every question, with an honest desire to do his duty, he gave his vote, and generally his voice. The effects of such a course were at the outset unfavourable to him. A man who stands alone in Parliament, a solitary sentinel, while the two armies are marching and countermarching, pitted against each other, and manœuvring, is regarded as a marplot or a traitor. As they advance or retreat, he is generally brushed aside, and often trampled down. He is offensive to both sides; the side which he opposes think little of him, the side which he supports are vexed by his independence. No doubt a man may counteract these defects of position by peculiar qualities, by wit, or

sarcasm, or eloquence. He may make himself so formidable, as to establish his power. Hanging on the flank of the army, he may fire frequent shots, and inflict severe wounds. His musketry may pick out leaders, and lacerate the ranks. By such a course, though solitary, he is effective; and, assisted by free discussion and a free press, his speeches become incidents in a debate. Hence it is that such speakers have often made themselves so dreaded by Governments, that at any cost they must be silenced. A seat in the Cabinet, or a high position in diplomacy or in the Colonies, is not too dear a price to pay to get rid of them. But there was nothing of this sort of tactique in Sir Robert Inglis. He had not the gifts for such a line, and assuredly no taste for it. He was a ready speaker, but not racy; fluent, not brilliant; not a man to electrify an audience; unimpassioned, formal, didactic, with a certain regularity in his periods, and a formality in his manner, which took off from the effect of his rhetoric; a calmness in his tone which made you rather esteem the man than admire the orator. Men did not rush in from the library or the kitchen when he rose, or crowd the benches to hear him. When his portly figure and genial countenance appeared on the floor, the white waistcoats at the bar continued to flutter, and the drowsy stagers on the back benches slept profoundly. But if Sir Robert Inglis had had the powers, he would not have condescended to employ them with a view to personal ends, nor would he have ever been induced to attack, or inflict pain. From such courses, as ri-

gorously as Wilbeeforce, he abstained. He was often assailed; he had many provocations. O'Connell poured upon him his philippics; Shiel played upon him his jets of ridicule; champions of Liberalism did not like his dread of change; the advocates of progress denounced his prejudices. Taunts of bigotry, intolerance, and Pharisaism, were freely poured on him. But these things did not move him; they passed as summer lightning passes over the sturdy oak. He was not wounded by them, and he did not retaliate. The only time we ever saw him moved, was not by personalities, but by irregularity. A coarse interruption offended at once his love of order and his sense of decorum. The offence was gross, and, as it sprang from low excess, it deserved censure. He showed on this occasion that, if he did not say severe things, it was from no want of power. Aristocracy of talent, he said, he admired; he felt respect for the aristocracy of birth; but the aristocracy of money he despised.

But pursuing this line of a self-restrained and solitary action, Sir Robert Inglis, discredited at first, earned at length his reward. Like strong plants, his repute grew, slowly, firmly; it bore fruit in his latter days. Little considered at first in the heat of party, he became at length a power in the House of Commons. The House learned to look for his opinion, and to respect it. When he rose to speak, he was at once heard. The measure which he supported was the better for him; the side which he opposed suffered. No doubt his courtesy and kindness helped this result; but these are legitimate

sources of moral influence. There were few of eminence on either side who did not style him their friend; nor was it a mere name. They felt to him as friends, and with reason, for they owed him some act of kindness, or some grateful courtesy. They had served with him on Committees, and had there felt both his impartiality and his power; for in the smaller circles of Committees his retentive memory and his various knowledge made him an acquisition. Gradually, as the House saw the deference with which its leaders treated him, they too listened to him with respect. No doubt, on a host of questions which in these stormy days occur, his opinions and those of the House differed widely. They thought him prejudiced and old-fashioned; he thought the majority rash. A chasm lay between his position and the flood of novelties which ran in a troubled current below. Still there were many questions on which both parties could meet, and on which they learnt to appreciate his judgment. And they rejoiced to have among them a man so disinterested and so genial, who mixed in every social circle, and took his part in Parliamentary business, and knew more than most men, and was the associate of men of science and letters, and the liberal patron of art, and the fast friend of men of genius. They found him opening his doors with a kindly hospitality, and receiving at his table men of the most opposite opinions, yet carrying among them an atmosphere of goodness, which he breathed without effort; unsuspected, because thoroughly genuine; displeasing no one, because so simple and unaustere. Such a

man was valued by them, the representative of a rare but eminent class, on whom the University, who sent him, could hardly be said to reflect honour, but whom it chose as the accurate type of its highest qualities — its scholarship, refinement, and virtues. So it fell out that, when he was selected to preside at Oxford over the Association of Science, every one felt the choice to be appropriate. For, in truth, from the continuity of his literary pursuits, and the excellence of his memory, he possessed upon most subjects competent knowledge. No one, indeed, would compare his knowledge with that of men who had made science their speciality, nor with the marvellous acquirements of Lord Brougham. But the man who had lived in intimacy with Hallam and Palgrave, Professor Owen and General Sabine, Mrs. Somerville and Dr. Whewell,—who had read enough to appreciate their intelligence, and to join in their conversation,—was of no mean acquirements. We remember introducing him to a distinguished astronomer of the North, and spending with him a pleasant afternoon in his observatory. On that occasion, while he delighted the man of science with his pertinent questions and remarks, we observed that he secured the information of the day, and lodged it in one of his copious note-books for future use. In literature it is needless to say that he held an honourable place. Though too much engaged in public life to be himself an author, he walked abreast of the works of literary men. In such conversation as fell from Southey, Macaulay, or Croker, from Walter

Scott and Miss Edgeworth, and Rogers and Lockhart, from Mackintosh and Sir Stamford Raffles and Guizot and Baron de Staël, from Copleston and Blomfield, he took his place, and held it well. In travels, Sir John Franklin and Basil Hall, Fraser and Rawlinson, Barrow and Murchison and Joseph Wolff, found him not only a willing but a well-informed listener. Every one felt that, as one of the leading trustees of the British Museum, none was more competent. Of his knowledge of art we need hardly speak; for almost every eminent artist was his friend. He was familiar with Chantrey, and Laurence, and Wilkie; with many who have passed from among us with brilliant reputations; with others whose genius yet remains to adorn our walls; of whom there is scarcely one who would not say that his memory is endeared to him by many acts of kindness and words of courtesy.

For he had that happy art, possessed by few, of making his courtesy attractive by its sincerity. The outward manner was the expression of inward feeling; the kindness of the heart shone transparent through the look and smile. It was, indeed, to many a reason for frequenting some social clubs, that they were sure to meet him there. Men hardened by the contact of common society, or chilled by the false show of pretended interest, expanded under the hearty smile with which he welcomed them; his words of discriminating notice, and the pressure of that friendly hand. His sympathy with the young was in him a characteristic. It was worth while to procure an introduction for a youth into his

society; he was sure to be remembered. Great men and notable were his guests; but among them you were sure to see some youth unknown to fame received cordially, introduced to distinguished guests, and made to feel himself thoroughly at home. What he did in the more direct exercise of charity, it is not for us to tell. His charities were as large as they were secret. Men who knew some of his largesses, or observed his hospitality, fancied that he was rich. It was not so. The surplus, which a Chancellor of Exchequer longs for, and rich men enjoy, was unknown to him. Like Wilberforce, he never had a margin. If he got the two ends to meet, it was all he could do. He spent all he received. A legacy of £1000, left him by a younger friend, who knew the demands on his purse, was almost the only spare money he ever had through life.

Such as we have described him he remained: with none of the paternal tastes for the country; nothing bucolic about him; no farmer; not a follower of John Evelyn; not skilled as a gardener or florist,—the only flowers he knew were those which affectionate hands sent him, and which, full-blown like his goodness, adorned his button-hole. Men, the haunts of men, the ways of men, the works of men, were his interests.

His rest from Parliamentary labour was sought and found in travel. He had ransacked the Continent. Every city was familiar to him. Its highways and byways were known. For its towns he needed no cicerone. All the objects of interest there, and

all their traditions, were known to him. In that capacious memory there were stored more facts than Murray has gathered in his volumes. He remembered all he read and observed. The stages, and distances, and times of travel, jotted down in his journals, stood fixed in his recollection. He could recall to the French postilion, with whip and jack-boots and laced jacket, the hours and minutes which the same stage had taken them years before. In his travels his genial temper was shown. His arrival at the hotels where he was known was hailed as a jubilee. Mine host and the hostess, the waiters and the ostler, ran out to welcome the *bon chevalier*. Even at the *table d'hôte* he was a presence. Not, like most travellers, confining his thoughts to his party and himself, he acted rather like the entertainer, picking out the best dishes, offering them to the guests near him, and taking pleasure in their partaking of them. The good old habit of thankfulness adhered to him. To the surprise of the guests, he said grace before he sat down. And there was in his manner something which at once kept up dignity, and made men wish to know him. "Est-ce que Monsieur est duc, ou pair?" was the Frenchman's question. The Spanish Don was so delighted with the stately courtesy that resembled his own, that he heaped grateful attentions on him. His secret was the secret of the Christian, to love and honour others as we love ourselves—to consider their feelings as we do our own. Therefore, though a sturdy Protestant, he respected Romish observances. No greedy guide ever opened relics for

him, or undrew curtains from pictures over altars, while the mass was going forward or vesper prayers were sung. One indulgence he allowed himself in his travels. Each morning he filled a bag with small coins, and emptied it in the progress of the day. He scattered it among the beggars who gathered round his carriage. Very wrong, we admit, ye economists, and contrary to the dogmas of science. It infuriated his courier. But let us not be severe. He confessed, though he continued, his fault. It was, he said, self-indulgence; a little money made the poor creatures look so happy.

Sir Robert Inglis began his travels in 1814, and continued them till 1853; not indeed every year, but he was abroad more than thirty times. We see him now, in his old-fashioned yellow chariot, passing, with all the appurtenances of foreign travel, up the valley of the Rhone, in the midst of that glorious scenery—chestnut woods and walnut trees, trailing vines and gems of flowers, rocks above and rolling waters below, and far away, flashing in the distance, the peaks of unearthly snow. He sits there, and looks round him, benign with his beaming smile; the heavens change, as they do in that land of storms; clouds gather, and hurricanes sweep across the Alps; blue skies and burning suns give place to drifting mist and driving rain. But whatever changes there are, there are none on that serene countenance. No less cheerful when hail-storms have driven him for shelter to the inn, and rattle against the misty panes, as when we saw him in sunshine on the river banks. Meet him on the

noisy railroad, in the scorching heat and blinding dust of an August day; when everybody else is out of sorts, he is radiant, with a friendly word for an acquaintance, and kind attentions for all.

In 1834, after suffering from a severe illness, Sir Robert Inglis was recommended to extend his travels. He went, therefore, to the East, starting in July, and only returning in December. Wherever he passed, in this his longest journey, he was received with attention. The governors of Gibraltar and Malta, the admirals on the different stations, the consuls in the towns, paid him the utmost respect. Ashore or afloat, they placed their accommodations at his disposal, and vied with each other in attentions to one whose public character was esteemed. His journal, which we have been permitted to see, marks his exactness and painstaking. Everywhere he collected information, and registered it. Distances and measurements are recorded; in some cases, rough sketches preserve architectural features; and classical quotations, with references to books, show at once his memory and his knowledge. Picturesqueness of description was not his forte; but correct information on various towns of Asia Minor and of Palestine, left to him valuable recollections and a store of interest.

But we must resume and close his history. After eighteen years spent at Battersea Rise, he removed, in 1833, to the house once occupied by Mr. Butterworth, in Bedford Square. He chose this unfashionable quarter partly because it was near many of his friends at the Bar and the Bench, chiefly because he

could obtain at a moderate cost a large house in which to store his extensive library, and to provide accommodation for his large circle of friends. In this house few, distinguished at the time either for literature or art, or known within the House of Commons, did not find a welcome. They now look back on pleasant evenings, in a circle which blended wit and wisdom, freedom and decorum. In that house he lived during the remainder of his happy life, disappearing from it during three or four months in the autumn, in order to recruit his strength by travelling in England, Scotland, or the Continent, and leaving behind him his cares and correspondence, returning there to resume his labours after his well-earned holiday. In the House of Commons he continued to rise in repute. The opinions, which appeared extreme and strange in his youth, sat better on the older man; and as they were honestly held, and were never offensively expressed, they never gave annoyance. True, he had no disciples; nor did he affect to be the chief of a section. The generation that was rising, opinions that were changing, found in him no response. He was the oak on the river's bank, which casts on the flowing current the reflection of its immovable stem. But though between him and the rapid generations of politicians, which rise so quickly and disappear, and which brought, especially after the Reform Bill, new views of public affairs, there was little fellow-feeling —there were established other ties. His influence in social life was great, and grew with his years. No young man who entered Parliament, no older

statesman who returned to it, but felt glad to make or renew acquaintance with him. To his house all were admitted; at his breakfast-table or at his dinner, guests met freely, and enjoyed the society. The House of Commons, where he had sat so long, regarded him with affection. When the members met after the recess, they looked to his familiar seat, and were delighted to see it occupied. He was an element of the House as necessary as the Speaker in the Chair. Time passed so lightly over him, and left the look and countenance so little altered, that the notice of his resignation came upon all men with surprise. The expressions of regret which poured upon him from every quarter marked the general estimation in which he was held; all felt that there had passed from the House a presence which would long be missed, and that the seat, which he had vacated, might be filled, but not supplied. In the words of Wordsworth—

> "But yet I know, where'er I go,
> That there has passed away a glory from the earth."

In the winter of 1849 he had a serious illness; but from this he recovered. In January, 1854, he felt his strength impaired; and, acting on the advice of his eminent physician, he retired from Parliament. A seat in the Privy Council was conferred on him (11th August, 1854), a tribute well earned, and graceful from those who advised it. His friends, though grieved at his retirement, comforted themselves with the hope that rest would preserve his strength, and prolong his days. It was not so; his work was done. Some symptoms in the following

autumn occasioned uneasiness. A slight ailment led to grave disorder. Early in the winter of 1854-5, the illness became serious, and to anxious eyes foreboded danger. But by him the issue was regarded calmly. He had been long prepared. He continued his usual pursuits. The literary works, which had long interested him, delighted him still. A thoughtful work of Sir Cornewall Lewis, recently published, was read by him during the latter weeks of his illness. But the higher theme was constantly with him. As long as his state of health allowed, he might be seen in his usual place in his parish church of Bloomsbury, which then, and for many years, had enjoyed the affectionate ministrations of Mr. Villiers. His satisfaction was observable in his countenance; and the look of delighted interest, with which he watched some young persons go up for the first time to the Sacrament, greatly impressed the beholders. His social habits remained. He was not able to enjoy general society; but the company of a few friends refreshed him, and they were received with increased cordiality and with warmer signs of affection. He was going his journey a little before them, and he drew to them more closely as they were about to part for a time. His look, his words, were full of tenderness, thankfulness for God's mercies, peaceful resignation, and an untroubled joy. Such a life it seemed only natural should pass away gently. The day which had opened brightly, and had run its course without a cloud, was likely to set in a serene evening. His hopes and his retrospect were alike clear. The decline of strength was gra-

dual, and the decay painless. There was no struggle. It was that mild change through which Autumn passes, as it drops gently into the keeping of Winter. The sublime song of elevated piety, the Te Deum, in which successive generations of Christians have conveyed to the ear of God their deep yet jubilant adoration, was on his lips at the moment when the last messenger reached him, and bore him from words of prayer, no longer needed, to the land whose sinless inhabitants, freed at once from pain and death, express their enraptured thankfulness in the language of praise.

In keeping with the humility of his character, he begged that no monument but a plain slab of granite should mark the place of his burial; inscribed only with his name, birth, marriage, and death; and the words of his last will record impressively his simple faith,—"I commend my soul to the mercy of God, through the single merits of Jesus Christ, having no hope, and desiring to have no trust, except in Him."

CHAPTER XIX.

WILLIAM HEY, ESQ.; THOMAS CLARKSON, ESQ.

Of other friends and coadjutors of Wilberforce we have been urged to make mention. But the life of Fowell Buxton has been written so lately and fully, as to render impertinent any further notice of it. He was brought, in 1818, into communication with Mr. Wilberforce, through his philanthropic interest in the state of our prisons; and he became soon after an effective supporter of the Abolition Cause. Mr. Wilberforce experienced his help on many occasions, from 1819 to 1824. In 1822, the experience of the veteran was of use to the younger philanthropist, to restrain him from his idea of visiting the West Indies. The same year, Wilberforce entered into closer communication with him; and, as he felt his own infirmities to increase, turned to him as his successor. In 1823, he finally committed the cause to his hands, visited him in Norfolk, and in 1825 selected him to move the writ for the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds. He, however, survived to read Buxton's speech, and learn his triumph in 1833.

Of another friend, endeared to him by years of

intimacy in his Yorkshire history, Mr. Hey of Leeds, we must say a few words. Mr. Hey was no less eminent as a philanthropist than as a medical man; and, immediately after Wilberforce's change of sentiments, the two friends opened communication with each other on plans of practical benevolence. In 1786, when Wilberforce visited Leeds, he became a guest of Mr. Hey's; and he then speaks of his "as a truly happy family, engaged in serving God." In 1790, he was urged by him to repair his strength by a visit to the Buxton waters. He then observed with admiration his friend's habits; a large professional business, yet the Sunday carefully honoured; his hands full of work, yet the loadstar of his course the love of God. To Mr. Hey Wilberforce had early imparted his ideas for correcting the abuses of county elections; and to him he first made known the scheme which afterwards took shape in the Association for the Suppression of Vice. He continued to correspond with him in the various passages of his public history; described to him the incidents in the great debate on Abolition in 1792; his anxieties during the stormy season of 1795; his resolution to attend the great Yorkshire meeting of that year; and his apprehensions as Pitt's policy became more boastful and more embarrassed in his later years. To him he communicated his dawning hopes in the cause of East India Missions in 1808; his doubts on the propriety of the seizure of the Danish fleet; his sorrow at the scandals of the Duke of York; his hesitation as he began to change his views on the Roman Catholic Claims; his alarm

after Percival's death in 1812; and his thankfulness on Napoleon's fall. He turns to Mr. Hey for advice when famine falls upon the Yorkshire poor in 1801 and 1803; and he consults him on the introduction of the Conventicle Act by Lord Sidmouth, and is guided by his opinion. Mr. Hey, on the other hand, obtained help from Wilberforce in his various schemes of philanthropy; as when he originated the Society for Assisting Candidates for the Ministry at the University; and when, in 1798, he originated the idea of the Christian Observer, which was finally established in 1801.

William Hey, of whom we thus speak, was born in a village near Leeds, in 1736, the son of a manufacturer, who had married the daughter of a respectable surgeon. He had early chosen the profession of medicine. Apprenticed to a surgeon at Leeds, he completed his education in London, and returned to his own town in 1759, to begin his professional course. At a time when religion was little in vogue, he was impressed with its truths, and he pursued from his youth upward a course of blameless morality. He became at length a firm believer in Christian truth; and though his scientific pursuits, which led to his being chosen a Fellow of the Royal Society, placed him in intimate communication with the celebrated Priestley, he maintained with unwavering constancy his religious faith. He was chosen, in 1783, President of a Philosophical Society in Leeds; and his anatomical lectures, delivered in the Leeds Infirmary, of which he continued to be surgeon till his 76th year, were attended by crowds of

his townsmen. His early connection was with the Methodists, from whose preaching he derived good; but it was the Methodism of Wesley, for he never discontinued his membership in the Church of England. He was warmly attached to the institutions of his country; and when they were assailed, towards the end of the eighteenth century, he stood forward as their champion. His townsmen insisted on making him an alderman, and twice (in 1787 and 1802) he was chosen mayor. He became the intimate friend of Dr. Jowett, Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge, and of Dr. Milner, the President of Jesus College and Dean of Carlisle. In 1781, perceiving the growing divergence of Methodism from the Church, he withdrew himself from their connexion, though he retained through life his respect for many of their members. His life was stricken by trial; severe accidents induced lameness; sharp illness laid him aside from effort; the death of some of his children, after they had grown up, brought heavy sorrows, and chequered with many shadows the course of his long life. But he retained the convictions, and continued to taste the comforts, which had sustained his earlier years; and in 1819, after a short illness, in his 84th year, he died.

Of another person, Thomas Clarkson, whose labours were gratefully acknowledged by Wilberforce, it is fitting that we should speak. The rivalry which has been set up between them through the biographers and eulogists of each, had no place in their feelings, nor need it have any further notice here. Clarkson's services must not be exaggerated;

but truth forbids us to overlook or underrate them. He rendered, at a critical time, effective assistance to the cause of Abolition; his labour was long and faithful; and though, in the warfare of philanthropy as of nations, our eyes naturally turn to the commander-in-chief, we ought not to forget the officer who, whether as a pioneer or as the quartermaster-general, contributed services essential to the campaign.

Thomas Clarkson was born at Wisbeach, in Cambridgeshire, in 1760, the son of an exemplary clergyman, master of the grammar school in his native town. In this school Clarkson received the elements of education; was transferred from it to St. Paul's School in London, and found his way at last to St. John's College, Cambridge. Whilst there, the Vice-Chancellor, a warm friend of liberty, offered a prize for an Essay by a B.A. on the question of Slavery. Clarkson, who had gained a prize the previous year, resolved to compete; and in order to qualify himself, he inquired minutely into the circumstances of the Slave Trade. He obtained the Latin prize for his Essay; and, full of the subject on which he had written, he resolved to translate, enlarge, and publish his Essay.

Just at this time, a small committee of merchants and tradesmen in London (all of them, except two, members of the Society of Friends), presided over by Granville Sharp, was turning its attention to the subject of the Slave Trade. Struck by the Essay, the members encouraged the young author; and, as they took pains to circulate it widely, it made a strong

impression on the public mind. It had the further effect of introducing Clarkson to those who had already interested themselves in the Abolition cause. For by this time, not confined to London, but spreading through England, a conviction was slowly springing up of the evils of the Slave Trade. At York, Norwich, Manchester, and Liverpool, individuals were found impressed with the importance of the question, and eager to obtain correct evidence; but this evidence it was hard to gain, for the leading merchants in our chief towns were either engaged or interested in the trade. Some of them were ignorant of its horrors; others shut their eyes to the facts. Those who knew them would not divulge them; the captains, who sailed the vessels, would not speak; those who had retired from the trade were silent, lest they should criminate themselves. In order to reach the facts, a man of indomitable zeal, resolution, and courage was required; and in Thomas Clarkson such a man was found.

Starting in his inquiries, he first visited Bristol; there, assisted by the Friends, he was at last able to obtain some precise information. Thence he proceeded to Liverpool, where, in spite of threats and some personal danger, he accomplished his object. In both places facts were communicated to him, often by stealth and under cover of night, always accompanied with a promise of secrecy, which made known to him the character of this baneful trade. But while the mass of evidence grew in his hands day by day, the difficulty of obtaining persons to

speak publicly to the facts remained. At length some captains, who had gone into the trade in ignorance, and had left it struck with horror—others, who had gone into it carelessly, but had their eyes opened by its character—gave their names, and promised to speak. When this stage was reached, in February, 1788, Clarkson returned to London. Meanwhile, the London Committee had been prosecuting their labours. They and Clarkson were independent of each other, though they co-operated, and were often in communication. The pamphlets, which were published and circulated by the Committee, had begun to tell on the public mind. In Bristol, the local press took up the question; the interest in it spread to the press of Gloucester, Chester, and Worcester. Committees to promote the cause were formed in Manchester and Birmingham; even in Liverpool sturdy advocates of Abolition appeared.

Meanwhile, Mr. Wilberforce, led by distinct sources of information, had been pushing his inquiries. Through the African merchants, and through the aid of Sir Charles Middleton, he had collected valuable evidence in 1786 and 1787. Mr. Latrobe had brought him some facts. To these, in the autumn of 1787, were added the materials which Clarkson had collected; and Wilberforce assisted Clarkson to obtain further evidence through the Treasury. A month before Clarkson's return to London, Mr. Pitt's interest had been enlisted in the question by Wilberforce; and after the Premier had heard and weighed Clarkson's evidence, he sum-

moned the Privy Council to examine, as a Board of Trade, the state of our commerce with Africa. The case being now so far advanced, Mr. Pitt (Wilberforce being laid aside by illness) brought the question before Parliament in May, 1788; and the result, on the motion of Sir W. Dolben, who had personally examined the slavers in the Thames, was an Act regulating the number of slaves according to the tonnage of the vessel. This was the first step in the road of Abolition. In the inquiry conducted by the Privy Council, Clarkson was of service, both in giving his testimony and procuring witnesses; but as the case was still imperfect, Clarkson, at the request of the London Committee, renewed his travels through England; and by indefatigable labour, assisted by Wilberforce and by local parties, he accomplished his object. Thus by these various modes a mass of evidence was collected, and reported to the House in the spring of 1789; and on the 12th of May, backed by Pitt, Fox, and Burke, Wilberforce began that memorable campaign, which ended in Abolition. To further the cause, Clarkson was sent to Paris; and on his return he assisted it by getting and giving evidence before the Select Committee of the Commons. During the long struggles Clarkson was strenuously engaged; he hunted up witnesses, he brought them forward, he collected and circulated information, and in this useful labour his energy and untiring zeal rendered eminent service. We need not wonder that, under these continued exertions, his health should at length have given way; and in the autumn of 1794 he was

compelled to relinquish the work, and to retire from the scene.

That, in the course of these efforts, Clarkson committed no mistakes—that his vehemence never ran into heat—that his political opinions, which were strong, did not at times mar and check the advancement of the cause—we will not undertake to say. But that his motives were pure, that his zeal was great, and that his exertions were both unwearied and effective, admits of no doubt. Therefore most fitting it was that, when, in the spring of 1823, the Anti-Slavery Society was formed, Clarkson as well Wilberforce should be enrolled as its vice-presidents. On its anniversary, in 1830, the two old friends and fellow-labourers met; and they met without a shade of rivalry, with mutual esteem. Clarkson proposed that Mr. Wilberforce should take the chair as his natural right, entitled to it as the "great leader in our cause." Wilberforce, in taking the chair, said that he "could not have been called to it by any person more dear to me than by my valued friend and fellow-labourer, Thomas Clarkson;" and he gracefully reverted to the days "when we began our labours together, or rather when we worked together, for he began before me." Clarkson survived to accept the office of President of the Anti-Slavery Convention, which met in June, 1840. That Convention had for its object to establish the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and to proclaim a crusade against slavery all over the world—never to cease while slavery survived. In that Convention were assembled the veteran champions of the Aboli-

tion Cause, and notable men from all parts of the world. Fowell Buxton and Dr. Lushington were there; and Brougham was strong in sympathy, though kept away by shattered health; missionaries from the West Indies appeared, who had toiled and suffered in the warfare which at length had closed; Abolitionists from the United States, where the battle was yet to be fought; delegates from France, who had vindicated their principles in the Chamber and at the Bar. There also was Joseph Sturge, who had now for many years devoted himself with energy to this cause. The assembly was held in Freemason's Hall, on a bright summer day in June, and over it was chosen to preside the aged Thomas Clarkson, bending under the weight of above eighty summers, but still immovable in his unbending purpose. "I myself can say with truth," had been his answer to the invitation, "that though my body is fast going to decay, my heart beats as warmly in this sacred cause, now in the eighty-first year of my age, as it did at the age of twenty-four, when I first took it up."

The scene has been given us in picturesque language by the great painter Haydon, who attended the meeting to find materials for an historical picture, and who found that the reality moved and touched his heart. When the meeting was full, Joseph Sturge entered, and said that Thomas Clarkson would soon be there; but begged that, as his infirmities were great and his nerves weak, no tumultuous applause might greet his entrance. "In a few minutes," says Haydon, "the aged Clarkson

came in, grey and bent, leaning on Joseph Sturge for support, and approached with feeble and tottering steps the middle of the Convention. Immediately behind him came his daughter-in-law (his son's widow) and his little grandson. Many had never seen the old man before, and all bent forward eagerly to observe him. Aided by Joseph Sturge and his daughter, Clarkson mounted the chair, sat down in it as if to rest, and then, in a tender, feeble voice, appealed to the assembly for a few minutes' meditation, before he opened the Convention. The venerable old man put his hands simply to his forehead, as if in prayer, and the whole assembly followed his example. For a minute there was the most intense silence I ever felt. Having inwardly uttered a short prayer, he was again helped up, and bending forward and leaning on the table, he spoke to the great assembly, as a patriarch standing near the grave, or as a kind father who felt an interest for his children. Every word he uttered as from his heart; he spoke tenderly, tremulously; and, in alluding to Wilberforce, acknowledged his decay of memory in forgetting many other dear friends, whom he could not then recollect. After urging the members to persevere to the last till slavery was extinct,* lifting his arm and pointing to heaven,

* If any one desires to have his decision strengthened on this question, and his feelings kindled anew, let him read in the last work of Dr. Livingstone (his journey along the Zambesi and Shere) the picture of the devastation, wholesale massacres, and atrocious crimes, of which he found the terrible traces—all due to the accursed slave-trade now, to their disgrace, carried on by the Portuguese nation.

his face quivering with emotion, he ended by saying—'May the Supreme Ruler of all human events, at whose disposal are not only the hearts but the intellects of men—may He, in His abundant mercy, guide your counsels, and give His blessing upon your labours.' There was a pause of a moment, and then, without an interchange of thought, or even a look, the whole of this vast meeting, men and women, said, in a tone of subdued and deep feeling, 'Amen, Amen!'"

Such was the scene which met the painter's eye, and this the moment which he chose for his picture. He had not been conversant with such scenes; he had never witnessed a public meeting characterised by strong emotion; but he tells us that, among all the tragedies he had witnessed on the stage, and the deeper tragedies of our suffering life, he had never seen such feeling as that which was called forth by these few simple words. Women wept; men could not check, though they shook off, their tears; and the "Amen!" sounded in the painter's ear as the "death-warrant of slavery all over the earth."

At the next meeting of the Anti-Slavery Convention, in June, 1843, Clarkson was unable to be present; but still strong in mind, he dictated an address, reviewing their progress, and urging them to go on: "for the same Power, which blessed the beginning, will not withhold His support from the end; and therefore I now say, Farewell, and in that beautiful word I include my prayer for the blessing of God on all that concerns you, both temporally and spiritually." This was the last effort of his public

life; he survived above three years, and died in September, 1846, in his 87th year, having only kept his bed a week. There was a brief struggle as life and decay met; but finally he resumed his habitual calmness, and died in peace.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT, M.P., FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, &c. &c.

We cannot bring ourselves to close the review of Wilberforce's Friends without a notice of that eminent person, with whom for many years Wilberforce was closely connected. In truth, there was no one, beyond the circle of his family, for whom Mr. Pitt entertained the regard that he had for Wilberforce. Harry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, was more connected with him by official relations; Mr. Rose, so long his financial Secretary, was bound to him by close allegiance; Mr. Canning was attached to him as his disciple and ardent admirer; Lord Grenville was for many years his colleague; Mr. Addington, while Speaker, was his constant friend; but, except Mr. Eliot, his brother-in-law, no one lived with him so intimately as Wilberforce, or enjoyed so entirely his confidence. The others were his political associates; but Wilberforce was his personal friend. Nor was that friendship abated by political events, as happened to so many of his colleagues. Lord Grenville was, in the later part of Pitt's life, estranged from him. During Pitt's re-

tirement, their intimacy became less cordial; and on Pitt's return to office, Lord Grenville was his opponent. The separation between Pitt and Addington is well known. Even Lord Melville, when he started an intrigue to unite the divided sections of the party under a third person as Premier, received from Pitt a reply of cutting indifference. Recounting the conversation to Wilberforce, Pitt said with a smile, "I had not the curiosity to ask what post I was to hold." But neither office, nor retirement, nor restoration to power, affected the relations between Pitt and Wilberforce. Their intimacy lasted, unbroken, from the time they both entered Parliament till Pitt's premature death. Once only it was endangered by political difference on the French war. But while this difference produced antipathy against Wilberforce in the followers, it did not shake the regards of their chief. He felt it, indeed, keenly—so keenly as to cost him, what was then unprecedented, a night's rest. But the difference soon passed, and the intimacy was restored. To him alone Pitt opened his confidential plans, both of finance and general policy. While Canning, Grenville, and Dundas could not penetrate his thoughts at Walmer, to Wilberforce they were laid open. For a man so self-contained as Pitt, this confidence is singular; for though he had warm affections, and for his relatives cordial sympathy, to the world at large he showed great reserve. From the world he stood apart; and, looking down on it from his solitary eminence, he felt and was alone. But with Wilberforce he was always open

as he had been in youth; and we cannot therefore omit William Pitt from the circle of Wilberforce's friends.

It was long the wish of Wilberforce to write Pitt's life. We cannot wonder that the intention was not fulfilled. He was busy in important works till age and infirmity drove him from Parliament, and through life his disposition was not fitted for a continuous task. Besides, he was too near the period, the incidents too fresh, the actors too near him, the close of the life too tragical. During the conflicts of party, Pitt's character, as was natural, received little justice. His opponents hated him for the transcendent powers which banished them from office, and kept them out of it for twenty years! His associates were busy in concert with him while he lived, still busier when he was gone. They had no leisure from the strife of politics to sit down and retrace the story of their departed chief. But justice has at length succeeded to unfairness. The character of Mr. Pitt is at last known, first through the sketch of a writer of a different party, Lord Macaulay, who employed his genius to clear away the mists of prejudice, and do justice to a reputation much maligned. Now Pitt's biography has been written by Earl Stanhope, who had an hereditary claim to the duty, and who has brought to the congenial task his usual accuracy and candour as a historian. But while the public life of Mr. Pitt has thus been written so as to leave nothing to be desired, there remains to us a different task—to describe him as he was in private life, and to sketch,

however feebly, his portrait in the gallery of Wilberforce's friends.

It was in the year 1780 that Pitt and Wilberforce entered Parliament and that their intimacy began. They had known each other at Cambridge; but they lived there in different sets, and their acquaintance was slight. When they met in Parliament, their acquaintance was favoured by circumstances. Pitt was then a young and poor barrister; Wilberforce had the command of fortune, and his villa at Wimbledon supplied a place in which Pitt found recreation and rest. For Pitt was fond of the country, and at no time robust. Thus the intimacy arose, to which, in the outset of these sketches, we have referred. Those, who judged of Mr. Pitt from his manners as a minister, did not truly appreciate the man. The incident given in Napier's Memoirs presents a truer picture. The distance at which he kept his colleagues (even such colleagues as Lord Castlereagh and Lord Hawkesbury) disappeared within the circle of his family, and gave place to the kindness which showed itself—with the young, in buoyant spirits and sportive frolic—with older associates, in playful conversation; for of jest and repartee he was a master. This disposition remained even in his later years, when, enfeebled by illness and harassed by cares, he had reasons enough to be morose. But even then the mind unbent itself readily in companionship with the young and the witty. How much more in that brighter season when, fishing with Wilberforce at Wimbledon, or joining him in his suburban garden, he expanded

without restraint in the exuberance of his natural gaiety. In truth, distant as Pitt was in his official manner—and who can wonder, when we know the race of harpies who swarm round a Premier?—and shy before strangers, he was full of jest among the companions of his hours of freedom. None more genial in conversation, none more prompt in repartee, none more gentle of temper or tolerant of difference. In the gladiatorship of wit, none more successful. In that pleasant season, when he used to meet Addington and Dundas, the Duchess of Gordon, and Fergusson of Pitfour, in familiar intimacy, the broad humour of the Scotch laird, and the broad Doric of the Scotch duchess, called forth all his powers. Then he threw off care, and became once more a boy. "Where have you been this long time, Mr. Pitt?" said the Duchess of Gordon. "Have you been talking as much nonsense as usual?" "At least I have not heard as much, Duchess!" "Come, Jekyll," said Pitt, after a passage of arms with that famous wit, in which Pitt had foiled him, in the lobby of the theatre, "here is my carriage. Let me set you down." "No need," was the answer; "you have done that already!"

What Pitt was in literature, those, who enjoyed his intimacy, knew. He had studied at Cambridge, under the directions of his celebrated father, who was bent on developing the powers of the remarkable boy. His studies had been interrupted by the weakness of his health; yet such was his quickness, that he learnt more than most men; and, forgetting

nothing, he became so good a scholar, that Greek remained to him through life a familiar language. Lord Grenville used to say that he envied Pitt his classical knowledge more than his political eminence; for, while he himself read Greek daily through life, and Pitt seldom opened a Greek volume, he found him a better scholar than himself. And this fact came out incidentally; for when Lord Harrowby (no mean scholar) was engaged with others in examining a hard passage in Thucydides, and, puzzled by it, they agreed to refer it to Pitt, he translated it without a moment's hesitation, though he had not opened the book for twenty years.

Of his quickness in grasping political subjects it is needless to speak. Adam Smith found him an adept in the difficult science which he had set forth. The deputations that went to him, whatever was their topic, discovered, from his questions, that he had mastered the subject in hand. His eloquence, always stately, became at times transcendent. His speech on the slave-trade was pronounced by competent judges, by Fox and Grey, Wilberforce and Windham, to have been a marvellous display of eloquence. When he dilated on the future of civilized Africa, his peroration of twenty minutes was sublime, like that of a man inspired. His speech on the Coalition in 1783, and on the murder of the king of France; his burst of eloquence in following Sheridan on the mutiny of the Nore; his speech against peace in 1800, and for peace in 1801; these have been pointed out by competent judges as unprecedented in their power and effect. Not

less remarkable were his financial speeches, those on the French treaty, and on the budgets of successive years; the latter less noted indeed because so frequent, but not less notable for every quality of eloquence. The speech which he delivered when he returned to the House in May, 1803, has been spoken of as electrifying in its power; Fox said of it, that if Demosthenes had been present, he must have admired, and might have envied. But the effect on this occasion was partly due to the eagerness felt to ascertain his opinions, and the desire of two hundred new Members to hear the famous orator. His speeches which succeeded this, were probably more eloquent; those especially in which he thundered against Addington's policy, when assailing his government in the spring of 1804.

But what we are more concerned with now, is the character of the man. Nothing can be more beautiful than his attention to his mother: in the pressure of business, through his struggle with the Coalition, in the contests on the Regency, in the formidable troubles at the end of the last century, she was never forgotten. Constant letters to her or her companion marked his affection. His love for his sister was strong; his grief at her death intense. His sorrow at the death of his brother-in-law Eliot exceeded (Rose said) all he had ever witnessed. His temporary estrangement from Wilberforce cut him to the quick. Affections so warm were accompanied by a life of blameless purity. In an age and amongst statesmen remarkable for viciousness, his

life was pure. Gambling was then a passion. It was the usual diversion at the Clubs. Fox contracted by gambling enormous debts. Gambling was sanctioned by princely examples. The young Pitt touched cards, tasted their allurement, and threw them down. He was capable of strong affection; his attachment to Miss Eden was sincere; but in the licentious habits of the age he was never involved. It was this rare virtue that, contrasted with the habits of his great rival, led to his popularity in his struggle with the Coalition, and to the confidence felt in him through life both by the king and the people.

Viewing him dispassionately, we notice other features. The habits of political men in those days offered a contrast with our own. The differences between parties were wide; the language, which opponents allowed themselves to use of their rivals, was scandalously strong. Fox abused Lord North with scurrilous vehemence; when Mr. Addington was Premier, Fox's letters characterize that amiable statesman as a low, vile fellow. For Pitt, who had every fault a man can have in the eyes of his opponents—young, upright, able, likely to keep them all their lives out of office—there was no invective which was held to be too strong. Turn to Pitt's language, and you find it a singular contrast. In his private letters, as in his confidential conversation, hardly a bitter word escapes him. The single remark applied to Lord Grenville, who had cruelly disappointed him, that he would make that proud man "feel that he could do without him," shows

emotion, but also his self-command. He sought high office; he liked it; he felt he could be useful in it. He was conscious of the shortcomings of Addington's government; but he proved, by his long retirement, and his refusal to promote or tolerate intrigues, that he would not purchase office by a departure from his own lofty self-denial. He hit his adversaries hard in debate; but, after the asperities of the debate were over, he retained no rancour. He felt none against Fox; he sought to unite with him under Lord Shelburne; he would have acted with him in the same Cabinet in 1804. He wrote Fox's name on his own list as Foreign Secretary, when that post was only second to the Premiership. No doubt he demanded the Premiership as his right—and with reason, for he had no equal in finance, in council, and in debate; and the consenting voice of England proved it by calling him to the helm in 1804.

In an age when falsehood was common, he was sternly true. His anxiety for purity in the public service was shown by his uniform actions. He gave away a great sinecure, when he himself was poor and about to be driven from office. He refused another sinecure, when he was out of office and oppressed by debt. It was with difficulty that the king persuaded him to take the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports: it was a new thing to see the king entreating the Premier's friends to help him to overcome Pitt's lofty disinterestedness. He refused again and again the splendid offer of the merchants (whom his policy had enriched) to give him a largess

such as Fox took from his friends, and Grattan from his admirers, and in our days Cobden. It was an age of jobbery and corruption, yet against all jobs Pitt set his face. To his patriotism Wilberforce has done justice; and the praise is deserved; for Pitt loved his country with a passionate attachment. Wilberforce does not exaggerate the case, when he represents him as ready to lay down his life for England. In fact, to his labours his life was sacrificed. Not less signal was his humanity. In this respect he and Fox were alike remarkable. The severities practised in the Irish rebellion were odious to Pitt. Wilberforce records his look of expressive indignation when an Irish lawyer in the Lords attempted to justify them. Humanity made him the eager advocate of the abolition of the slave trade. He was slow in receiving the evidence of its horrors; but, once convinced of these, he was resolved to put them down. The Court was against his views; great part of his cabinet, his ablest colleagues, more than half his party. But he was immovable. The generous sympathies of Fox were indeed equally cordial. But Fox had not the same obstacles, nor had he the restraints and difficulties of office.

Pitt's resolution to introduce to Parliament the Roman Catholic claims, which shipwrecked his government, arose from his honourable feelings. He had committed himself in favour of the Romanists during the struggle for the Union; and he would redeem his word, though it cost him office. Only when he saw the effect of the proposal on the mind

and health of his sovereign, he resolved not again to bring the question before Parliament.

When we observe Pitt in his retirement from office, we perceive his superiority. Very different from other statesmen, who, when driven out of office, set to work at once to intrigue for their return; very different from Walpole, who found his retirement intolerable; Pitt, while he lived at Walmer, thoroughly enjoyed himself. He became an eager farmer; the best gentleman-farmer, said Sir Charles Middleton, he had ever seen. He became an active volunteer. He raised a regiment; he mustered and drilled 3000 men; he set on foot judicious projects to defend the Kentish coast from the threatened French invasion; he raised gunboats, he improved fortifications, and found in these various duties absorbing engagements that fully occupied him. He did not care for months to enter the House of Commons. He made for himself also, by his domestic affections, the wholesome interest of a family. His kindness to his nephews, thrown off from their natural protector, was characteristic of the man. He wrote to them, he counselled them, he entered into all their difficulties, he offered them a home. Himself a confirmed bachelor, he received into his house his niece; and changed his habits, in order to place over his household a clever but eccentric girl.

Such was the man, and certainly his circumstances were as rare as his qualities. Fortune, capricious fairy, lavished on him not only golden gifts, but dazzling opportunities. He was born in the purple

of politics, the son of a statesman, the most distinguished and popular in England. Brought up by this eminent man with care, guarded from evil with tender solicitude (a contrast to the unhappy training of Fox), his mind was developed by classical and mathematical studies, which were pursued by him at Cambridge for an unusual length of time with intense delight, under great advantage, and the oversight of an able tutor. His command of words, and the action accompanying them, were developed under the instructions of his father, himself a finished actor, and the first orator of his age. Thus educated, the youth learned the practice of our debates, and the habits of our public life, by diligent attendance in its great schools, the two Houses of Parliament. His health, which was naturally feeble, was strengthened by regimen; and he entered Parliament, as he joined the Bar, at the early age of twenty-one. His first speech, made without preparation, at the call of his friends, raised him at once into the front rank of orators, and recalled to the House the voice and gestures and eloquence of Lord Chatham. Placed thus on an elevation from which most men would have fallen, he kept his place by universal consent, and for twenty-five years electrified the House of Commons with masterly displays of finished eloquence. Hence, whilst most men have to work their way in Parliament from obscurity to notice, and to pass through subordinate offices to the higher posts, Pitt alone vaulted at once to the summit. Within a year and a half from his entrance into Parliament, he became Chancellor of the Exche-

quer, and leader of the House (at the age of twenty-three); refused the Premiership before he was twenty-four; and, accepting it at the age of twenty-four, after he had sat less than three years in Parliament, he held this envied post for seventeen years, through the most critical passages of our history, with growing authority; and he laid it down against the wish both of the Sovereign and Parliament, of his own accord, from scruples which some may lament, but which all must admire.

Thus fortunate in the early part of his life, he was not less distinguished at its close. For, after he had resigned office, and the hurricane of war and danger returned, he was recalled by the voice of the nation, was replaced in the post of Premier, and as Premier he died,—"Felix opportunitate mortis." For to him even the dangers of the times were opportunities. They supplied him with a field for genius. The period from 1780 to 1806 is one of the most critical in our history; a complete change in our commerce; an organic change through a legislative union with Ireland; a financial change in our taxes and currency; a revolution in the state of Europe; a great European war; the madness of the king; the rise and growth of the empire of Napoleon. Nor should we forget that the French Revolution is chiefly remarkable, because it introduced a change in European opinion, which altered then, and still affects, the policy of nations, the existence of dynasties, and the habits of the people. In place of the old systems, whether of despotic power or constitutional government, it introduced principles, till

then unknown in Europe, borrowed from the United States, and forced into the heart of the Continent by France, which had the widest influence over the European mind. These principles, which spread, swift as the cholera, over Europe, imbued an influential party in England, and were by them eagerly propagated. Denounced by the philosophy of Burke, they were confronted by the policy of Pitt. The conflict was stormy and hazardous, but Pitt unquestionably was the leader of the opposing forces.

We are apt to forget how he was trained for this combat, and to what causes he owed his eminence. We should remember that his success was due to his principles as much as to his powers. His father had been intensely popular, not from his eloquence alone, but from his lofty patriotism. Directed by this great example, as well as by paternal precept, Pitt entered Parliament a resolute reformer. His reform principles were openly avowed, and they drew on him the opposition not only of the king's friends and the Tories, but of the aristocratic Whigs. For the Whigs disliked and feared the principles of economy and reform.

But of all the virulent enemies of these opinions, the most determined was the king. George III. was a singular compound. He had some talents, and many good qualities. He was orderly, attentive to business, domestic, moral, and upright. He started with great advantages. He came to the throne a youth; and he had the promise of a long reign. He had the good fortune to be born and

bred in England; and England, sick of the Germans, hailed him as a born Englishman. He had the habits of an Englishman; he spoke and wrote the English tongue; he rode well; he was a sportsman; he was a keen farmer. He was simple in his tastes, and fond of his wife and his children. He had no learning: but the world is not learned. He had no refinement; but the world is not refined. He affected the life of a plain, straightforward yeoman, who rose early, dined plainly, worked hard, went early to bed; was homely in his ways, familiar in his talk, kindly in his notice of the middle class and the poor. If he liked to gossip, and ask any one he met a multitude of questions, people liked him all the better; for the habit showed that he was sociable, hearty, and did not give himself airs. No doubt he had strong prejudices; he was self-willed, obstinate, and narrow-minded; but these are the faults of English farmers, and of a great many besides farmers. All these habits tended to make him popular. But he threw away his popularity by one grand mistake at the outset. He had had knocked into his head, while he was a child, a scheme of government which it took years and disasters to knock out of his head. It was impressed on him that the Crown had been the slave of two great parties in the State—the Tory gentry, and the Whig aristocracy: that these parties had bullied the sovereign, and had forced him to select his Cabinet and the officers of his Court from their own ranks. The new project was that the king should be his own minister, and should rule in spite

of party. So he began by sending Mr. Pitt adrift, who was the nation's idol, and by substituting for Pitt, Lord Bute, who was not fit to be a Court chamberlain. Lord Bute soon fell by his own incapacity, and then the king had to take his ministry from one of the old parties whom he dreaded. But this sharp lesson failed to teach him wisdom. He set to work, in spite of it, to carry out his favourite scheme in a new way. He could not name his own Minister, nor choose his Cabinet; but his idea was to form a party within Parliament, that should enable him to thwart and trip up his government, and to traverse or defeat Parliament. Hence sprung the party of the *King's Friends*—a party new to England, and odious; for of all things the English hate a secret cabal. So on the Cabal and the King there was rained down a pelting hailstorm. Burke thundered on them on the right, and his thunders grazed the throne; Pitt scorched them by the lightning of his eloquence; Churchill lashed them in verse; Junius pilloried them in prose. The king and his friends became a by-word, at once hated and despised. Under this cloud of obloquy, augmented by the American war, George III., defeated in his schemes, and at last deserted by his minister, Lord North, was forced at length to swallow the distasteful ministry of the Whigs, and among all the Whigs, the man whom he disliked the most, Charles Fox.

It was in this condition, to which he had brought himself by his own obstinacy, that the king entered on his conflict with the Coalition Ministry in 1782.

His way of fighting the battle was characteristic. The ministry were all-powerful in the Commons, and had in that House a parliamentary majority. So he set on foot an intrigue; employed a vain peer, not his responsible minister, to conduct it; influenced the House of Lords by an unconstitutional message; and by a majority in that House, always offensive to the Lower House, he upset, by a sudden stroke, the Bill on which the hearts of the Commons were set, and with it the Cabinet which had proposed it. Of all his many blunders, this was the most serious. The fury of the Commons knew no bounds; and they had just reason for anger. They had been thwarted in their strongest wishes, and they were bent on revenge. Then it was that, dimly perceiving his danger, the king turned to Pitt, and sued him with abject entreaty to come to his help; and Pitt consented, and took up the contest. He saved the king, in the only way in which, in our constitutional government, a statesman can help his sovereign—by withdrawing him from the battle, standing in front, and sheltering him. When the combatants looked each other in the face, the aggrieved majority found that they had no longer to do with their blundering monarch and an odious clique, but with a responsible minister, young, able, and determined. On him, therefore, fell the anger of the majority, but on him also were fixed the eyes of the people.

By this time the people had learned to know William Pitt. He had been only three years before their notice, but there was hardly a man, from the Land's End to the Pentland Frith, who

did not appreciate and admire him. He was the son of their old favourite; and he had proved himself worthy of his sire. His eloquence was famous; his administrative powers, tested by office, had been proved equal to public work: and he was as eminent in financial management as in oratory. He was a stripling in years, but he was a king among men; and, standing in his rightful place, he shielded and covered the throne. In occupying this place, it was evident that he was the master, and that the king and his clique had succumbed. For Pitt had been asked once before to take office, and had refused. He now accepted it on his own terms; and his character and his antecedents were guarantees that his terms provided for an independent and self-reliant policy. It was plain to every one that the king had given way. For Pitt had held, during his short public life, every principle which the Courtiers disliked. They were in favour of the war with America; he was against it. They were for the influence of the King's Friends; he had spurned it. They were for Lord North and his corrupt practices; he had refused to coalesce with Lord North, and had sided with Burke. They were for sinecures, and he was opposed to them. Nay more, he had proved his sincerity; for when a sinecure was in his gift, and he was urged to take it, he had put it sternly from him. Economy was needful, as Burke had shown; but the only guarantee for economy was Parliamentary Reform. And Reform was odious to the King and the Court, as well as to both the sections of the aristocracy. Pitt alone

upheld it; pressed it; brought it forward again and again; and this course showed his uprightness and his resolution. These things the people noticed; they had watched his conduct, and had made up their minds on his character. At length they had the man they wanted, for this man was now their Premier.

This was a great change, not of men only, but of policy. The long battle with their self-willed sovereign was over; the king had put himself in the hands of his responsible minister; and that minister was a purist and reformer. From this moment the unpopularity of George III. ceased, and a revulsion of feeling set in, which lasted for the remainder of his reign. Loyalty, the natural sentiment of the English people, rose high on the crest of the wave. Then the good qualities of their king came into view, and were remembered. Men compared him with the English nobility, and saw that he was better than most of them; with other kings—with the selfish ambition of Frederick the Great, with the vile scandals of Louis XV.—and they felt his superiority. No doubt he had prejudices; but all men have some faults. At one strong prejudice of his they did not wonder. He disliked Charles Fox, but there was a reason. Fox's life had been scandalous, and his scandals had disgusted even the cynic Walpole. His talent and his convivial powers were used to attract and seduce the young; and thus he had drawn into his circle the Prince of Wales, and in that circle the Prince's passions were inflamed and his morals debauched. No wonder that the king did

not desire as his confidential adviser the man who had outraged his best feelings as a father. At that moment the India Bill was the talk of the country. The people could not understand it. It was complicated and obscure. But this they heard confidently asserted, and by no less a man than Dr. Johnson, that, if the Bill passed, it would make Fox's party lord it over their sovereign; and that it was a fight between the sceptre of George III. and the tongue of Charles Fox.

At length they saw the king surrender himself into the hands of a minister who was in every point a contrast to Charles Fox. He was no jobber; he had never sat in a Cabinet with jobbing Tories, or played high at Clubs with worthless gamblers. He was as firm a reformer as he was pure in morals. If he was ambitious, what then? He had shown himself, like his father, the first man in the House of Commons, and worthy of the first place. If he was proud, they liked him all the better; for he was proud against the Court and the aristocracy, proud because filled with a noble purpose to serve his country. So Pitt became Premier, and the most popular minister since the days of Chatham. His popularity lasted long; from that spring-day in 1784, when he drove from Berkeley Square to the Guildhall, to receive the thanks of the City and its freedom, among admiring multitudes; all through the days of peace; all through the conflicts of the regency; all through the series of his free-trade measures, by which he beat the Whigs and won the hearts of the merchants; through the

fury of the revolutionary outbreak; till slowly, and with reluctance, he plunged into a costly war. That war, with its debt and dangers, took much from his popularity. The stringent measures, to which he resorted at home, detracted even more from it. But his ability in carrying out the Irish Union somewhat restored his popularity; and when peace came, and a weaker ministry took the helm, his absence was felt. Hence, when the public dangers increased, and when war became inevitable in 1804, the nation loudly demanded his restoration to office; and, as the "pilot that weathered the storm" in the words of Canning and Walter Scott, as the "saviour of Europe" in the language of the Lord Mayor of London, he was again hailed by multitudes on his way to the Mansion House, who took the horses from his carriage, and drew him up Cheapside, with as frenzied admiration as had greeted him in the early days of 1784.

When, therefore, we follow Pitt into the gallery of statesmen, and assign him his place among them, we say without hesitation, that in that proud array of distinguished politicians he stands pre-eminent. But now that we are settling his position in a different group, we reverse our judgment, and, comparing him with the little figure who was its centre, we award him a lower post, both in fortune and service. Wilberforce had set before himself three objects for his public life; 1st, the freedom of the negro slave; 2nd, the introduction of Christianity among the various races of our empire in India; 3rd, the proof, by example, that a public

man may serve his country actively in Parliament, yet follow the rule of his conscience and the will of the Supreme. These objects were pursued by him, and all of them attained, in a life of long and diligent service.

Pitt also had set three objects before him: for we accept the impartial testimony of Wilberforce, and reckon him a genuine patriot. He sought to serve his country by a threefold service: first, by preserving peace, and carrying out the work of peace, development of our finances; extension of our commerce; economy in the application of public money. This object he followed diligently, and for ten years attained. But in this object he was at length foiled. Disastrous circumstances forced him into a great European war; that war blew economy to the winds; heaped on our shoulders a load of taxes; left us a crushing debt; brought our great Bank to bankruptcy, and crippled our trade. Driven by these dangers from the arts of peace, Pitt had, for the last ten years of his life, to unlearn the lesson he loved, and to study the uncongenial art, how to develope the resources of war. And that war, widening in its proportions, terrible in its disasters, baffling him with its continuance, while it mocked him with visions of peace, so harassed his closing years, as to fill him at length with dismay; and at his death he left his country wrapped in clouds of darkness, swept by a hurricane of conquest, the conqueror relentless as Attila, with ambition boundless as his power.

Pitt's second great object was Reform: reform in

the administration of government, which was wasteful and venal; reform in the representation of Parliament, which was incomplete and debased. These objects he sincerely desired; in the last he failed. For, intrigued against by his colleagues, outvoted by his party, thwarted, and at last baffled, by events, he saw the hope of parliamentary reform vanish like a dream. He was hardly more successful in administrative reform. Pure in his own practice, spurning with a lofty disinterestedness pension and place, he saw himself, through the carelessness of his ablest colleague, involved in an inquiry which brought discredit on his government, and covered himself with obloquy; and he, who longed to make his government pure, was so encompassed by dangers, so pressed by party division, so assailed by the revolutionary mania, that he thought himself bound to buy support at any price, and to ward off opposition by gifts, which in Ireland took the shape of bribes, and by such a load of peerages and places lavished on his English supporters as we cannot now look back upon without regret and shame.

He had a third object (for he was sincerely humane), he wished to make his administration known by the Emancipation of the slave. He stimulated his nearest friend to undertake the question; he himself undertook it in his absence. He made for this his most eloquent speeches; he pursued this with sincere earnestness. He prosecuted it in spite of king and court, and colleagues and party; yet he failed. The object, on which he

had set his heart, was not carried through his long ministry. He had to leave the victory and the honour to his opponents. Thwarted by his ablest colleague, deserted by a large section of his party, baffled by selfish interests which he despised, harassed in his last years by overwhelming official business, he gave to this great cause such a divided and ineffectual help, that he was suspected of being lukewarm and insincere.

Thus, with all his genius, his rare powers, and singular opportunities, the three objects of his public life were all frustrated, and failed. Can we wonder that he sunk in his prime, prematurely worn out; can we deny that the broken stone, which covered his remains in our great Abbey, was a suitable symbol of a shattered life? Retracing that life now with the calmness of history, we find it a great tragedy; an outset of brilliant promise, marvellous powers, great events, stirring adventures; a fortune that soared to the zenith; then a sudden collapse, and a mournful end.

How was it, we ask? Whence came the final blow? Pitt entered Parliament on the 23rd January, 1781, when he had reached his 22nd year; he died on the 23rd January, 1806, in his 47th year. In early life his health was delicate; but the weakness of his constitution seemed to have passed away under a careful regimen. For years he conducted public business in office, and in the House of Commons, through the most critical times, against the ablest opponents, with unabated power. The labours of Sir Robert Peel, when he resumed office in 1841,

were as severe perhaps as Pitt's, but he had not the same difficulties to contend with. He had not to provide for the incapacity of the sovereign; nor to meet the horrors of the French revolution; nor to check the contagion of Jacobin principles; nor to confront the dangers of an European war, urged on by the genius of Napoleon, the most ambitious conqueror and the greatest captain of his age. Yet Pitt bore these labours for a time without injury; the best evidence of this fact is, that his sleep was not disturbed. We remember to have heard,* that returning, after an enormous amount of labour, from a late debate, to Dundas's villa at Wimbledon, Pitt went to bed, and Dundas locked the door of his room that no one might disturb him. The Premier slept so soundly, that when Dundas entered his room at a late hour in the following afternoon, he was still asleep, and was awoke, as they feared he might suffer from want of food. The first time his sleep failed him was when Wilberforce opposed him on the question of the French war, in 1794; and this shows rather the sensibility of his heart than the weakness of his health. But there followed after this a strain which was sufficient to upset any constitution. For the effects of the French revolution, the mutiny of our seamen at the Nore, a European war, complicated negociations, the Italian conquests and the rapid rise of Buonaparte, the attempt at peace with France and its mortifying failure, a smouldering disaffection in Ireland ending in rebel-

* This and many other anecdotes I derive from the delightful conversation of the venerable Lord Sidmouth, in his later years.

lion, the tedious negociations for effecting the Irish Union, and the public bankruptcy, were all compressed within a space of ten years. No wonder that Pitt's health began to feel the strain. His first serious illness was in 1797; from that time his health became uncertain. His habits also changed for the worse. The port wine, which was prescribed to him in early life by his medical advisers, told more upon him. Early hours were abandoned; late hours of rising became his practice. When he was released from office in 1801, it might have been hoped that his health would be restored. Yet it was from this time forward, in the following winter, and in the summer of 1802, that his attacks of illness became more frequent. The Bath waters were resorted to by him. When he appeared in the House of Commons, in May, 1803, an accurate observer describes with painful minuteness the ravages of illness on his physical powers. No longer that grand face, which Gainsborough painted, or the Pitt who was seen by the sculptor on the slopes at Windsor in 1788, just after he had forced his way, in spite of the Court and its clique, into the presence of the king, and was met returning with bounding step, the head thrown back and the countenance elate: "his physical powers," says the observer of 1803, "are perceptibly impaired; he exhibits strong marks of bad health; though his voice has not lost any of its depth and harmony, his lungs seem to labour in those prodigious sentences, which he once thundered forth without effort."

It is true that his return to office, as is often the case in vigorous minds, seemed at first to brace and

revive him. The enemies whom he had to confront, the difficulties he was to face, acted like a tonic. It was the trumpet of battle rousing the war-horse. A sanguine temper, the consciousness of power, made him meet the conflict with delight. Still there there were signs which showed the danger. Lord Castlereagh, in writing to Lord Wellesley in May, 1804, with full confidence in Pitt's intellectual resources, had dropped the ominous words, "if Mr. Pitt's health does not fail him." To Lord Eldon Pitt himself had said, when deserted by Lord Grenville, that he could do without him, but it might cost him his life. But the powers of the statesman, already overtasked and groaning under the pressure, were to meet with a strain that might have overborne even a firmer frame. The weight thrown upon Pitt's shoulders by Lord Grenville's desertion was great. It was augmented by the disabling illness of Lord Harrowby. It was lightened a little by the union with Addington, in the end of 1804; but fearfully augmented by the fall of Lord Melville, by the anxieties which preceded this event, the excitement of the struggle, and the bitter pangs of defeat. This was succeeded by the desertion of Lord Sidmouth and his party; and, in spite of Pitt's earnest entreaties, the obstinacy of the king could not be overcome, and the autumn of 1805 saw the struggling minister, who had just passed through a laborious session with scarce any help in debate in the Commons, obliged to look forward to a repetition of the same labours with his shattered forces.

Add to this that the year 1804, in which Pitt

returned to office, and the following year, in which he had to bear single-handed the weight of government, were among the darkest periods of English history. For in 1804 Buonaparte, seizing the reins of government as emperor, and succeeding in separating Spain from England and uniting her with France, had assumed the crown of Italy, extended his dominion over Holland, and completed his preparations at Boulogne for the invasion of England. The year 1805 was no less formidable. In that year the united fleet of France and Spain, having decoyed Lord Nelson to the West Indies, had for some weeks the command of the English Channel; and Napoleon, standing on tiptoe on the heights of the chalk cliffs of Boulogne, waited only for the signal that his fleet had arrived, to cross the Channel with his gun-boats, and throw such a force on the shores of England as we could not have successfully opposed. Worse than all, such at that time was the rancour and blindness of party, that neither Fox nor Addington believed in the existence of the danger, but treated it as the idle bugbear or the shabby fraud of government. All these dangers to be met, our fleet to be equipped and sent forth, negociations and loans to be made in order to unite Austria and Russia in a confederacy against France; the whole of this enormous labour, only diversified by the anxious conflicts of debate, fell with its full weight on Pitt's shattered frame. With marvellous buoyancy he bore up under the burden. Anxious for rest, but unable to find a day; longing to retreat to Walmer, but for two years not finding a

single interval; urged by his physician to take the waters at Bath, but prevented from following the advice, it was no wonder that he felt, and showed in his looks, the unalleviated strain. Yet such was his vigour of mind, that when, in November, 1805, he escaped to the Wilderness at Lord Camden's, and joined a circle of friends, his conversation was buoyant still, and he detailed with his ancient eloquence the emotions with which he had received at night and opened the despatches that told him of Lord Nelson's death, in the arms of victory, at Trafalgar. At the same time speaking (it was his last speech) at Guildhall, on the Lord Mayor's day, after he had been drawn to the Mansion House with exultation up Cheapside, his few words, heard by Sir A. Wellesley, delivered by that majestic voice that was never to be heard again, recalled, in their patriotism and disinterestedness, the character of his life.

On the back of this enormous pressure came the last thundering blow. The news of the capitulation of Mack in October had reached London early in November. But the blow was lightened by the tidings of the victory of Trafalgar, which annihilated Napoleon's fleet, and rescued England from danger by sea. On the 2nd of December, the great coalition of Russia and Austria, which Pitt had laboriously framed, and from which he expected so much, was crushed on the field of Austerlitz. When he received these despatches, Pitt asked for a map of Europe, and desired to be left alone; and soon after, when he reached his house at

Putney Heath, observing a map of Europe hanging on the wall, he said mournfully, but with the prophetic instinct of genius, "Roll up that map; it will not be wanted for ten years!" The effect of this blow on the weakened body was instantaneous; his look was changed; it became wan and sunk; his voice lost its rich melody; the powers of digestion were gone. To a friend his servant said, that from this time he used to hear his master walking up and down his bedroom great part of the night; that at times he had ventured in, and had remonstrated with him; but, even when he induced him to go to bed, Pitt kept a light burning near him, and his bed was covered with papers. No wonder that the poor body could not stand such usage.

On the 9th of January, 1806, Pitt left Bath, and returned to his house on Putney Heath to die. Long after—as late, indeed, as 1840—the villa remained little altered, and the stranger might see the room in which the great statesman died. The villa, which stands near the summit of the Heath, not far from the Telegraph, had been taken by Pitt, when he resumed office in 1804, as a refuge from the labours of London, where, on a dry soil and a pure air, the labouring statesman might find rest. Rallying for a moment in consequence of the change, he allowed some of his political friends to visit him, and conversed with Lord Wellesley and others with unabated vigour on subjects of public interest. But the excitement was too much, and he fainted away. From that day, the 14th of January, he kept the

house. The physicians at first buoyed themselves with hopes that their skill might save him. But on the 19th a typhoid fever set in, and all hope disappeared. We borrow what remains of the story from the narrative given by the Bishop of Lincoln at the time to the Dean of Carlisle.*

"The bishop had often pressed the physicians to allow him to inform Mr. Pitt of his danger; but he had been constantly refused by them. At length, on Wednesday, January 22nd (Pitt died on the 23rd), his physicians told the bishop that it was nearly over, and that he might say what he pleased. On this the bishop desired admittance into Mr. Pitt's room, and he and one of the physicians entered it together. 'Mr. Pitt,' the physician said, 'the Bishop of Lincoln is here.' Pitt, opening his eyes, said, 'Well?' in a tone that expressed, 'What is there in that?' The bishop then said, 'Mr. Pitt, I am sorry to find you so poorly this morning: I should much wish to read a prayer to you.' In an instant Pitt turned to the other side of the bed, and said to his physician, 'How long do you think I have to live?' When the physician hesitated, and muttered something, that it was certain he was much indisposed, but that many had recovered who had been as ill, and he might yet perhaps be restored to health, Pitt fixed his penetrating eye on him, and quietly asked him to leave the room. He then turned himself to the side on which the bishop was

* The bishop has toned down this narrative in his biography, and Lord Stanhope has naturally adopted his account; but our information comes from contemporary sources remarkable for their accuracy, and there is no doubt that the scene occurred as here described.

standing, and looked steadily at him. The bishop renewed his offer to read a prayer suited to so solemn an occasion. Pitt replied, 'I have lived so much in the habitual neglect of prayer, that I think it almost unbecoming, and, I fear, unavailing to pray now.' The bishop answered this remark, and read some of the prayers of our Liturgy. There was then a long and deep silence; and after this Pitt said, 'I am sure I have had great infirmities, and done many things that I wish I had not done; but I have tried to follow God's will, and,' clasping his hands with great energy, 'I cast myself on the mercies of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ.'"

On the following day Pitt died, and it is said that a servant, sent the same day from Wimbledon to inquire after his health, finding no one to answer his inquiries, wandered into the house, went from room to room, till, in the bedroom upstairs which looks with its bow-window over the heath, he found the body of him, who a few hours before had filled England with hope and France with fear, stretched in that deep stillness which gives to death its awful power. Wilberforce remarks,—"The time and circumstances of his death were peculiarly affecting; and I really believe that it dwelt on the minds of the people in London for a whole week. But London soon returned to its gaiety and giddiness; and all the world has been for many days busied about the inheritance, before the late possessor is laid in his grave."

In our day, a distinguished statesman, struck by

the death of two of his eminent contemporaries, spoke with impressive mournfulness of the brittleness of human reputation. A bustling Member of Parliament answered him, that public life was not, after all, so vain, as we might live for posthumous fame. "Don't talk to me," he said, "of posthumous fame, when I have seen that the fame of the greatest statesman does not last a week beyond his death!"

This lesson was impressively taught by the circumstances of Pitt's death. Yet some faithful hearts held fast his memory. Wilberforce showed his attachment by affectionate service. Rose dwelt with loving reverence on the memory of his famous master. Addington, reconciled by that great reconciler, the grave, delighted in after days to speak of Pitt's eminent qualities. A few months after Pitt's death, when the stir of a London season and the projects of the new ministry were already engrossing every mind, there came a visitor to Broomfield, who asked to be taken to Westminster Abbey, that she might look on the stone that covered the great statesman's remains. She, and her more eminent sister Hannah More, had long followed his course with dutiful homage. They had held him to be, as Wilberforce always reckoned him, the greatest and purest of patriots. Now that his service was past, and his life, with all its hopes dissolved like a scroll, lay in the vault at her feet a handful of mouldering dust, she stood long in pensive reverie looking on the name engraved below. Retracing the history of that remarkable career, she thought of his early entrance

on public life, his rapid rise, his towering elevation, genius beyond his fellows, rare opportunities and a dazzling fortune. When she reflected what a space he had filled in the world's eye; how in his hands were laid the reins of government and the conduct of the world's affairs; how England set her eyes on him and followed him with wonder, and Europe observed him as one of her greatest men, as the only person who could face Napoleon's threats and frustrate his schemes; how in the gifts of nature and qualities of mind he stood pre-eminent, and exercised over men a lordly mastery—such genius for administration, such wisdom for counsel, powers unrivalled in debate, an integrity which raised him high in public esteem, a patriotism that sought his country's good as the only worthy aim; and with all this a tender heart, pure affections, a genial kindness, a temper so gentle, and virtue so self-restrained; and such an intellect, its capacities, quick perceptions, penetration, capacious survey, retentive recollections; and all these marvellous powers, so absorbed in passing interests, and so enthralled by transient cares, that he had never found a moment's leisure to break his chain, and to grasp the only theme worthy of such a mind; how, harassed by anxiety and distracted by business, he had never disengaged his thoughts for that sublime contemplation which is at once the solace and the work of life—which, stretching beyond time, brings into time higher thoughts, and sheds over time a heavenly light, elevating the faculties while it quiets the feelings, satisfying the intellect

while it calms the heart;—when she thought how this noble labourer, yoked with inferior colleagues and baited by vindictive opponents, had fought his way through a weary life, wading amidst the ever-thickening swarm of debasing cares, and, worn out at length, thwarted by faction, and baffled by disaster, had fallen in the prime of life, prematurely old;—when, thus spread out before her, there lay unrolled, like a map, his life's eventful story, no wonder that the tender heart gave way, and that feeling found vent in a flood of tears.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CLOSE.

The course and close of Wilberforce's life were strongly contrasted with that of Pitt. Happily Wilberforce was allowed to pursue his labours for many years, and in a great degree to complete them. Not at the early age of 47, but at 74, the philanthropist passed away. The year after Pitt's death, Wilberforce accomplished the object on which his heart had long been set. The slave trade became illegal, and the English flag ceased to cover the hateful cargoes of human suffering. This object gained, the philanthropist proceeded to push his efforts to other countries, and to persuade other nations to follow the example of England. This labour occupied himself and his friends for many years. But while engaged in this, another object (such is the law of benevolence) rose before him. In England, the traffic in slaves had ceased; but in the Colonies slavery remained. The state of bondage was legal there, and the lot of the bondsman was hard. He was a chattel, without the rights of a citizen. The next step was to gain for him the rights of a freeman, and in this struggle Mr. Wilberforce spent

his remaining years. On his retirement from Parliament in 1825, he handed over this great cause to his successor, Mr. Buxton; and his life was prolonged till he saw the victory won—till he, the Moses of the African Israelites, witnessed the children of his watchful oversight step into their promised land.

But while engaged in this the work of his life, he had other objects in view; and one of these, almost equally momentous, was found in the lands of the East. That country of romantic story and fabulous wealth had attracted his notice in the early years of his political life. It was the battle-field on which was fought one of the fiercest conflicts of parliamentary warfare. On the question of India, Pitt and Fox had staked their fortunes. That ancient empire, which Alexander had sought but hardly touched, which Rome had coveted but never conquered, with its thrones and dynasties and races, had fallen, by strange incidents, through unlooked-for victories, by the agency of a private company and in the operations of mercantile adventure, into the hands of England. But of this new empire it was held, among its foremost traditions, and as one of the grand secrets of its safety, that we were not to name the name of Christianity, or to recognise its duties, or to set up its worship. If we ever departed from this restraint, it was said that our empire would pass from us, and that the various races, with their differing creeds, uniting against a common enemy, would cast off an alien yoke. Hence, when zealous Christians, impressed with the convictions of their faith,

repaired to India to teach Christianity to the natives, the British government, in a paroxysm of alarm, seized the intruders, incarcerated them as culprits, and drove them as exiles from their shores. That Christianity should be tolerated, far less legalized, in India, was a notion generally discarded. These traditions, deeply rooted, and held by most statesmen, Mr. Wilberforce set himself early to refute and overthrow. He began in 1793, when he entered on the journals of the House a resolution binding us to introduce Christianity into India. But the resolution remained a dead letter for twenty years. And whenever he or any one referred to it, he was met at once by the adjurations and warnings of experience. But it was a characteristic of Wilberforce, that he was as persevering as he was bold. An official, whom he had occasion often to assail with his remonstrances, said, "It is the fashion to speak of Wilberforce as a gentle, yielding character; but I can only say that he is the most obstinate, impracticable fellow with whom I ever had to do." With his settled convictions, he returned in 1813 to the resolution which he had carried; and by that time the public feeling, trained by long practice in the agitation of the slave trade, had learned its resources. No doubt, had the House of Commons been polled, they would have decided by a large majority against any legislative change. They were keenly alive to the political risk; and cared very little for the religious duty. But the popular feeling was aroused; important evidence was collected; experienced witnesses appeared at the bar; timid fears were allayed; the

unreasoning panic ceased; the arguments of the philanthropist, enforced by brilliant eloquence, told on the House; and a reversal of our policy succeeded. The Christian faith, throughout our Eastern empire, was not only tolerated, but endowed.

To these services, which were conspicuous, we must add the activity of Wilberforce in every philanthropic work of his busy age. The societies, which sprung up in the beginning of the present century, —one for Missions, one for the circulation of the Bible, others for purifying the press and for extending and elevating education,—were all associated with him. He took part in all; of many he was the prominent advocate. To the change which took place in the habits both of the clergy and laity, during the first thirty years of this century, Mr. Wilberforce contributed more than any one. How great that change was in the clergy, if any one cares to see, he will find it incidentally shown in the letters of Sir Arthur Wellesley, when Irish Secretary. That illustrious man, with the brusque frankness of his character, presents us with the view, then taken by official men, of the uses and habits of the clergy. That a man should enter the Church in order to bury himself in humble labours in an obscure hamlet of England, and spend his life in raising the vulgar mind, was an idea that never entered the head of a public man. Natural, of course, it was, that if a youth was a blockhead or an idler, too dull or too careless to succeed in a civil profession, he should be thrust for a livelihood into the Church. Quite right, that if his habits of life as a clergyman were

too scandalous for the Church of England, he should be drafted into the Irish Church, where, if he had influence, he might be pushed, in spite of character, into a deanery or a bishopric. But any other notion of clerical life never crossed the official mind. How entirely these ideas, and the standard of ministerial duty, are changed, we need not remark. Let us remember that this change dates from the early period of this century, and that, among other influences, not the least were the writings and example of this eminent philanthropist.

Nor must we forget what he did for public life. That was his peculiar sphere. He was placed in it early. He resolved not to abandon it. He drew across that sphere—dark then, and hazy—lines of light which chequer it still. His ideas, when he first entered Parliament, were the current ideas of his day. A seat in Parliament brought with it consequence. If accompanied by a turn for public speaking, or aptitude for business, it led to office. In the distance glittered, like stars on the horizon, a seat in the Cabinet, a place at Court, and a peerage. That any man should enter Parliament merely to do his duty and serve the cause of truth, was treated as a romance or a sham. Every member had his object and his price. "Conscience," said a shrewd Scotch member, "is an unparliamentary word. I vote always with Pitt. I never voted but once according to my conscience, and then I voted wrong." These notions, unaltered since the days of Andrew Marvel, William Wilberforce and his friends met and overthrew. Fools they might be reckoned,

fanatics and visionaries; but of this there was no doubt, their practice was consistent, and their decision was fixed. Henceforth the vulgar view of public life ceased to be universal. It ruled many; it did not govern all. It swept hundreds into its ranks; but outside there remained a band united and courageous.

When we ask how Wilberforce accomplished a work like this, so strange and hard—the work of changing men's opinions—we find in his life the answer. We see at once that this was the work of no common man. Mere sincerity was not enough, nor disinterestedness, nor integrity. These were possessed by several friends of Wilberforce, whose acts were little noticed, and whose minds exercised hardly a perceptible influence on their age. In fact, if any one would mould opinion in a country reflective as ours, he must rise above the mass in his intellectual stature, and be looked up to as a ruler among men. And nowhere is a man's position ascertained as it is in the House of Commons—and the measure of his powers and qualifications correctly fixed. For in that assembly is gathered the choicest intellect of the nation; which is tested by experiments, and tried by the most rigorous judgment.

Now, Wilberforce's place in the House of Commons can be clearly ascertained. His early life was cast among the most remarkable passages of our parliamentary history, and he was placed alongside of our most eminent men. It was an age of vehement contention, and the men who guided Parliament were giants. Their eloquence exceeded the oratory of any

other period; for Burke and Fox and Pitt and Sheridan and Canning surpassed previous examples and the statesmen of later times. Yet among men distinguished for the gift of eloquence, Wilberforce held no inferior place. Open Hansard through half a century, you will find on every great question not only his vote, but his voice. Treaties of trade with France, assessed taxes, the income tax, the revolutionary war, the French invasion, the national defences, the volunteers, the negociations for peace, the peace of Amiens, its interruption, the war with Napoleon, the invasion of the Peninsula, the Walcheren expedition, the seizure of the Danish fleet, the Orders in Council, war with America, the case of Lord Melville, the case of the Duke of York, the case of Col. M'Mahon, down to the case of the unhappy queen Caroline, the Roman Catholic claims, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus in 1817, parliamentary reform, public economy, the state of Ireland, the employment of spies, the question of criminal punishments (1814—18), law reform, trials for blasphemy, the distress and discontent of the manufacturing class (1819), popular education,—on all these subjects he spoke, and spoke well. Mr. Pitt, standing on his high pinnacle, said, "Of all the men I ever knew, Wilberforce has the greatest natural eloquence." Burke passed on one of his first speeches on the slave trade an imperishable eulogium. Romilly said he thought him the most efficient speaker in the House of Commons. Mr. Morritt, a shrewd observer, said that, though Wilberforce often spoke with want of preparation, and was at first diffusive, yet, as he warmed,

the mind poured forth so copious a stream of eloquence, that the House, enchanted by his voice and manner and words, hung on his lips with delight. True, it was not mere eloquence which gave him power, but an intuitive discernment of men, and a lively sympathy. These enabled him to catch the temper of the House of Commons. He learned how to handle that powerful instrument, which vibrates, like an organ, to the master's hand, but jars and creaks and groans when touched by unskilful fingers. Mr. Pitt used to say that no one understood the House better than Wilberforce. In later days Mr. Canning remarked, "If there is any one who understands thoroughly the tactics of debate, and knows exactly what will carry the House along with him, it is certainly my honourable friend the Member for Bramber."

But his oratory had to encounter many hindrances. In a busy life as his, passed in a whirl of work, he had no time for reflection or preparation. His speeches suffered from this cause. He became, as fluent speakers do, diffuse. What he could have done had he had more time, he showed in those few efforts where the importance of the subject constrained him, contrary to usage, to prepare. On these occasions he showed himself a master of oratory. His first speech on negro emancipation, his great speech on India, one of his speeches on the Roman Catholic question in 1821 (when he had an hour to prepare), were regarded in his times as masterpieces of oratory. Of his speech on the question of India in 1813, and its effects, we have

authentic information. Every thing was against him; the current of feeling in the House; the fears of the merchants; the timidity and indisposition of Government (for Lord Castlereagh, then the leader, had no mind no touch this thorny question); the Directors and their friends, in and out of Parliament, united, resolute, and hostile. Tierney, and many of the Opposition, were as much against him as the Government. But his speech changed the opinions of the House. An eye-witness, who did not concur with him, has recorded its effect. The mass of facts, in lucid order, the arguments strong, various, and earnestly pressed; the copious words; the graceful images; the silver voice, pleading so tenderly for neglected and degraded outcasts. The House, wavering and undecided, yielded itself to the charm. Wilberforce had every quality of an orator: a voice flexible and musical; action easy and effective; a competent knowledge of books; great experience of human life; the tact which deals with men; a tenacious memory, rich in facts; a fancy stored with images, and the wit which suggests contrasts. The latter quality greatly impressed Madame de Staël:— "Mr. Wilberforce is the best converser I have met with in this country: I have always heard that he is the most religious, but I now find that he is the wittiest man in England." It was not often (such was his habit of severe self-restraint) that he allowed himself the exercise of repartee, or that he brought out his powers of ridicule. These were indeed remarkable. Often, as he sat by his friend Bankes, he poured into his ear, in passing comments, witty

thoughts which bubbled up in his mind at the moment; but as soon as he got upon his legs, these were held in check and suppressed, that he might not inflict pain. Once only, when attacked with unbecoming personal sarcasm, he put forth his strength, and proved his power. For, to the personalities with which Sir Francis Burdett assailed him, he answered in such a way, that the stately Baronet seemed a pigmy in the hands of the orator, and from his high seat crouched, subdued and abashed, under the pelting storm.

While thus, through his self-restraint, Wilberforce dropped one of the most effective weapons of oratory, he had to encounter obstacles from the course of action which he had prescribed to himself. His philanthropy was energetic and aggressive, and though temperate in tone, and considerate of men's feelings, it of necessity raised against him many enemies. A large section of the merchants were infuriated by his interference with the slave trade. The directors and holders of East-India Stock regarded him as a meddling fanatic. The West Indian interest looked on him as a robber. These animosities ranged against him a large section of the House, and they united in hostility to him many organs of the press. Nor had he, to counterbalance these obstacles, the support of either of the great parties in the House; for he was wedded to neither party, and neither party could rely on him. Hence, as Henry Thornton remarks, the House heard him at times with impatience. The way the press dealt with him was summary, though certainly not singu-

lar. The reporters disliked his religious views; they sneered at his disinterestedness; so they inflicted the punishment which was within their reach. They drew their sponge across his speeches; or else they jumbled his thoughts and sentences into an unintelligible chaos. If you open the newspapers during the many years that Wilberforce was in Parliament, you will find his name in the debates, and remarks appended to it; but the remarks give you no idea of his speech; they are either a mutilated fragment, or a miserable caricature. His great Indian speech of three hours, which dazzled and delighted the House, shrinks in the report to a short compass.* All these things were against him, yet over all these obstacles he forced his way, and he sat in Parliament for half a century, prominent in the first rank of our parliamentary speakers.

No doubt, whilst his opinions marred his oratory, his high character assisted it. His speech had a moral weight beyond its mere talent. His sentence was looked for as a judgment—the judgment of an impartial mind. Sidney Smith said of him, with a little pardonable exaggeration, that he could do anything with the House; Flood wrote to him in 1813, "Your opinion has more weight than that of half the House besides." Pitt watched for his decision in Lord Melville's case with trembling solicitude; and Lord Melville's friends abused him as the person whose speech had carried and misled the House. When the scandals of the Duke of York became notorious, and Wilberforce's opinion was

* He was induced to publish a report of this, which Hansard adopts.

announced, the Prince had no option but to retire. The remarks of Sir Arthur Wellesley, in his despatches, show how the ministerial phalanx feared and disliked his influence. When he spoke, as he did in 1817, in favour of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, his adhesion was hailed by Government as a great stroke on its side. In 1818 the ministerial speakers charged Tierney with framing his motion on spies, so as to catch Wilberforce's vote; and the Opposition leader admitted that there was no one who, when he came out decidedly on the side of Government, could more powerfully help them. Lord Castlereagh, when leader of the House, repeatedly appealed to him to suspend his judgment till he heard the ministerial defence. Canning did the same on many occasions, not only on West Indian questions, but, in 1823, on foreign affairs. The same feeling led Lord John Russell to appeal to him for intervention in the case of the unhappy queen Caroline; and the resolutions, which he proposed and carried in the House, ineffectual for their object, remain monuments of his position in the House of Commons.

While these things mark his influence and his powers of oratory in the contentious arena of Parliament, we are not surprised to find his pre-eminence in the more congenial field of benevolence. In the meetings called from time to time for philanthropic purposes, or in those May-meetings which during his life-time assumed consistency, he was the undoubted favourite. He himself, with characteristic simplicity, used to wonder at the tumult of applause which greeted his appearance, and to fancy that the

meeting were cheering some remark of the speaker who was then addressing them. But it was not only admiration of his services which drew forth the tribute, but delight to find that they were to enjoy his eloquence. On such occasions his speeches combined every quality of demonstrative oratory, earnest, fervent, affectionate, with graceful images and flowing words, the fancy that lights the subject with gleams of sunshine, the love which beams in every accent and look. The admiration felt for him was not confined to home-audiences. Count Pecchio said of him, in 1818,—"When Mr. Wilberforce passes through the crowd, on the day of the opening of Parliament, every one contemplates this little old man, worn with age, and his head sunk upon his shoulders, as a sacred relic, as the Washington of humanity." When Blucher sent his aide-de-camp to convey to England the news of the battle of Waterloo, he was desired to call on the Prince-Regent, but several times over the bluff field-marshal bade him "let Wilberforce know all that had passed." When, the year before, some of the Cossacks had accompanied the allied sovereigns to England, they were so wearied and worried by sight-seers, that they shut themselves up in the Portman Barracks, and refused to admit any more strangers. But when Wilberforce appeared, their door flew open, and "the roughest of them, who looked as if he had never smiled in his life, unbent his ebon brows, and relaxed the muscles of his iron face, and even kissed his hand when he came away."

These tributes to his character were a righteous compensation for a life of sacrifice. No man can follow the line which Wilberforce took in public life without encountering trials. He must give up hopes of place, dreams of official power, and all prospect of serving his country through administrative effort. These are serious sacrifices. Less felt by such a man are the loss of dignity or rank which in England attend or succeed office. But these prizes also must be resigned. Wilberforce admits that he felt the sacrifice. "Often, in my visits to Holwood, when I heard one and another speak of this man's place or that man's peerage, I felt a rising inclination to pursue the same objects; but a Sunday in solitude never failed to restore me to myself." In 1800 he writes, "I was for a little while intoxicated, and had risings of ambition. Blessed be God for this day of rest and religious occupation, wherein earthly things assume their true size and comparative insignificance, ambition is stunted, and I hope my affections in some degree rise to things above."

But there are attendant on this course of life some public trials sharper than these. In a free country political parties will always be found; and party has its ties, its friendships, and its antipathies: join it, and you are welcome; stand aloof from it, and you are watched; desert it, and you are abused; all the more bitterly, the more nearly you approach the party you abandon. These trials fall severely on a sensitive mind. Wilberforce's opposition to Government on the French war drew on him a storm of attack—taunts from Windham, rebukes from Burke,

and an ostracism from Pitt's party. He felt this keenly; altered looks, confidence withdrawn, intimacy discontinued, these leave sharp wounds.

He indeed justified his course with manly courage, but not the less did he feel its penalties. Accused by Windham of petulant arrogance in following his own judgment, while he professed to revere the wisdom of Pitt, he answered, "his high opinion of the minister's integrity and his understanding ought certainly to make him give due weight to his opinions; but when, after coolly and gravely and repeatedly weighing the circumstances of the case, I have formed at last a deliberate judgment, that judgment, whatever it be, I am bound to follow. I am sent here by my constituents, not to gratify my private feelings, but to discharge a great political trust; and for the faithful administration of the power vested in me I must answer to my country and my God." He had to bear, from the same cause, the buffets of his constituents; they were as angry as the ministerialists in Parliament, and more coarse in their expressions. His friends from Yorkshire wrote to him that his conduct was universally condemned. When he visited the county, his supporters received him coldly; the ladies would not speak to him. He felt too—no one is insensible to it—the attacks of the press. Their arrows may be small as those of Lilliput; but if they are thick enough and continued, they pierce at last. Pamphlets, reviews, leading articles, made him their target. "Thou vile hypocrite," was the summary in which one of these writers characterized his conduct.

Let no one fancy that he was callous: he was keenly sensitive; but he tells us whence he drew his strength and his power of self-command. "All may be done through prayer—Almighty prayer, I am ready to say,—and why not? for that it is Almighty, is only through the gracious ordination of the God of love and truth." Such were his intellectual resources; but, after all, in his character lay his chief power. Strange to see the feelings of the man come out incidentally in his busiest seasons. In the midst of his engagements, let a friend appear with a careworn look or sad expression, in an instant his sympathy is roused—he must find out the reason—he stops to inquire, or he writes a note of anxious affection. In the midst of his labours he disappears, and you find him seated by the bedside of a sick servant, or in the chamber of a sick friend; then all bustle is laid aside, restlessness and perturbation are over; and, tender as a nurse, sympathizing as a woman, he pours his comforts into the sufferer's ear. Or you find him harassed by business; and with most men, at such seasons, the nerves become impatient of noise; but he hears a burst of his children's voices, and instantly they soothe him: "How can I be worried by such trifles, when I have such constant remembrances of God's goodness to me." You may suppose that this man of multifarious engagements has no time for small matters. You are mistaken. There is no incident in a child's life which does not interest him. He is staying at a friend's house in Norfolk, and a child is sick. He finds time to talk to her and cheer her. "Nothing," she writes, "can

exceed his kindness and his tenderness. He delighted me yesterday by telling me that he had still got that purple silk bag I made for him above two years ago." Wordsworth could not look on the sports of children with intenser interest. "I delight in little children; I could spend hours in watching them. How much there is in them that the Saviour loved: their simplicity, their confidence in you, the fund of happiness with which their beneficent Creator has endued them."

You follow him to London: you trace him from his house in Kensington Gore to committees in the City, and committees of parliament, and deputations to ministers, and ante-chambers in Downing Street; then through long nights of debate, till you become weary in reviewing his day. But in all this whirl of business, his thoughts, untrammeled, are turning to his home. When Romilly was passing upon him his eloquent encomiums in the House of Commons in 1807, on the success of the Abolition measure, and Mr. Hey subsequently asked him how he felt at the unusual burst of applause, he answers, "I can only say, that I was myself so completely overpowered by my feelings, when he touched so beautifully on my domestic reception (which had been previously realized a few evenings before, on my return from the House of Lords), that I was insensible to all that was passing round me." In the waiting room of a minister, at the table of a Parliamentary committee, he snatches his pen to write to an absent son to praise him for past attainments, to stir him up to fresh exertion, to urge him to give up his

heart to God and to find in His service his strength. He is touched with some account of his child's misconduct, and "though writing at the committee table, with people all round me, I can scarce refrain from tears." When anxious to see in another child the change he longed for, he writes to him in the midst of his parliamentary work with the longing of a father's love, "I would willingly walk barefoot from this place to Sandgate, to see the change." He comes home after midnight, worn out by toil, and learns that his daughter is sleepless; he flies to her room, he takes her hand, and, kneeling by the bed, he whispers to her of the tender Shepherd and His loving care, and he pours forth his prayer beside her and leaves her comforted.

No wonder that such a man was the charm of his home. Mr. Harford (to whom we owe an interesting volume, for which we tender our grateful thanks) describes his first introduction to Wilberforce. The philanthropist entered the dining-room, after his friends were seated at table, and his appearance was like sunlight coming into a dark chamber, the countenance of each brightening as he passed; for each he had a pleasant word. Widely different from what he became in later years, his step was springy, and his movements elastic. His frame indeed at all times spare; "his eyes, though small and singularly set, beamed with the expression of intelligence, and of comprehension quick as lightning. The features plain, but the mingled emanations of imagination and intellect, of benevolence and vivacity, diffused over his countenance a sort of

sunny radiance, which irresistibly acted as a powerful magnet on the hearts of all who approached him." Robert Hall said,—"Wilberforce, sir, is a little creature; he is an ugly creature; but look in his face, hear him speak, you forget it all; he is the incarnation of love." That love, though it expanded over others with a comprehensiveness rarely equalled, turned with intense force on the circle of his home. On this point, as misapprehension has prevailed, the facts should be noted. His thoughts and anxieties were unceasingly directed to the education and well-being of his children. "My own soul," he says, "should doubtless be my first object, and combined with it my children." "As to my plan of life, I conceive that my chief object should be, first, my children; secondly, Parliament." Here is one of his days in a summer vacation. "I get up about seven; then devotions for an hour; then dressing, and hearing one of the children read to me for three quarters of an hour. We dine together early, and then some of the children read till we walk out." On another occasion he says he had begun to walk with his children, and examine them in their books, and talk them over. He postpones his journey that he may spend the Sunday with one of his boys who is going to school, that he may make piety attractive through family love. He reads the Scriptures daily with some of them; when incidents of note occurred in his family, he gathers them together to comment on them. He gives up engagements, that he may spend his day with them. When they are absent, he calls them round him in thought, and commits them to the

care of the Great Shepherd. To each of them he writes once a week, and stops at friends' houses that his letters may not fail. In the midst of business, he writes to them loving thoughts and gentle counsels. He imparts to them, in free communication, his pleasures and his cares. When he is about to leave Parliament, they must know it first; to them must be addressed his last frank. Their interests occupy him; their trials touch him; their failings wound him to the heart's core. He retires from business that he may pray and weep for them. In special troubles he gives up a day to fasting and prayer for them. He is anxious about the habits of their instructors and their companions. He chooses for them, in their holidays, associates likely to influence them for good. No worldly ambition mixes with his desires for them: his one wish was that they might serve God as His ministers. When he saw one of them turning to politics, he conjures him not to think of it. "Do not be a politician; it is the most unprofitable of all subjects. It has been my business all my life; but I hope you are meant for something better." It is not to be wondered at that such a father should find in his children warm affection: "the boys coming out to welcome me, and receiving me with humiliating kindness; God bless them!" When losses fell upon him, it was their delight, and his, that a home under their roofs should open to him. He thanks God for "granting us in the evening of life, after the tossings of the ocean of this world, such a quiet and comfortable haven."

Mr. Harford has called Wilberforce's power over others magnetic. The secret of its magnetism was his moral purity and his love. Love, rising first to the great object of dutiful homage, and then falling in showers of sympathy over the earth and its inhabitants. Catch him where you will, he is always the same. In his early years he had been an idler; but, when his views changed, he became a student, turned every moment to account, and read books, a catalogue as large and multifarious as John Wesley —books of poetry and fiction, philosophy, history, and belles lettres. His memory, always good, was strengthened by exercise. He could repeat long passages of poetry; and the whole of the 119th Psalm. He committed to memory several of the Epistles of St. Paul while he walked the pump-room in Bath. His books were always a delight to him; his marginal comments show how he talked with them, treating them as friends, differing from them at times, yet delighted with them. His reading was natural, as a child is natural that talks to itself, and plays with the objects round it, unconscious that any eye observes it.

The infirmity of his eyesight made him dependent upon others, and either a friend, or some one engaged for the office, became his reader. Happy he who discharged for a time that pleasant duty. Specially happy if he caught him in the morning hour, when he had risen thankful, with unjaded strength, or was strolling, after he had met his household in family worship, into his garden, the walks of Broomfield, the sunny verandah of Ken-

sington Gore, or the shaded alley of Highwood. Nimble must be his companion; for the little figure, brandishing his spud, flew about like a butterfly on a summer's morning; now lighting on a flower, and pointing out its beauties; now watching the flight of an insect, charmed with its movements; then pausing, with serious reflection, to dwell on that bright Being who had so adorned our stricken earth, and filled it with beauty and fragrance. "Surely flowers are the smiles of His goodness." Then extracting a book from his pocket, which was loaded with volumes that dragged his coat to his heels, he pointed out some lines of poetry, or recited them; and as the leaf, which marked the passage, was swept off by the wind, a greater vagrant than himself, he ran to catch it, and failing to recover it, he stooped down to gather other leaves, covering his button-holes with flowers, talking, gesticulating, listening, bright, volatile, and restless as a child. But if his companion dropped a grave remark, told of some deed of kindness or trait of goodness, his face lighted up, or his eyes filled with tears: but if he told of evil deeds and evil men, the face became at once overclouded: and if he dwelt on the ludicrous aspect of evil, no smile from him; instantly he became grave, as if some bright being dropped among us from a world of purity, encased in a decrepit frame, marred by many infirmities, threw out from time to time, out of the shattered tenement, flashes of a higher life; but at the touch of evil, shrunk back with instinctive horror, and mourned with an angel's sympathy over so sad a fall.

After the morning walk, the conversation flowed on round the breakfast-table, protracted often to noon. Nor could any one break away. For, if he were a talker, such a listener he found! "I know little of science," we heard him say, "but you will find me an attentive hearer." And if his guest were shy and silent, he could watch the expressive pantomime of his looks and movements; or listen, as Arthur Young in blindness used to do, to that voice of music. So it was that his table always overflowed. To be sure, in earlier days, when the dinner-table gathered its crowd of guests at Broomfield or Kensington Gore, it was not easy to find seats, or supplies of food, or knives and forks. Those, whom the butler favoured, often had a hint to take their seat early, or they would find none. Yet people crowded there in spite of inconveniences; for, as an Amphitryon, who gave grand dinners, said to Wilberforce, "You can do what you please; people go to hear you talk, not for a good dinner." And his talk, what was it? Can we recall it? Like an ethereal essence, which fills the atmosphere, you enjoy it, but can't recall or impart it. Yet one trait was constant: he never gave a wound or left a sting. He never willingly dwelt on evil, or on the foibles of others. If he could, he passed them by; if pressed on him, he spoke of them with reluctance, and was on the watch for some redeeming feature.

His conversation was rich; for he had lived a long life with men, and had gone through stirring events. He could speak of almost all the notable persons who had appeared during two generations, in an

age remarkable for eminent men. Entering Parliament under the old regime in England and France, acquainted with the contemporaries of Lord Chatham, seeing the end of the ministry of Lord North; he visited Paris while Louis XVI. and his beautiful queen held their high court at the Tuileries, and he watched the first tiny streamlet, and the full torrent, of the French Revolution. He saw the dynasty of the Bourbons pass away, and the old institutions of France; and the meteor of Napoleon's empire rise and blaze as if it would last for ever, and then fade away and vanish. He had lived through a long European war, to the period of a settled peace; and during peaceful times, he saw a social revolution, the passing away of old customs, traditions, and parties, till the politics of England were recast and changed. Former habits disappeared with the celebrities of his early life; a new generation, with new ideas, filled the stage. Living so long a life, he, of whom at the age of twenty-nine his physicians declared that he had not stamina to last three weeks, was preserved to gather experience from a varied observation. So, with his mind enriched by recollections, and stored with the thoughts of the great events in which he had taken part, he approached the season when the body usually decays, and the mind and eye are weakened; yet with him age did not dull his mental vigour, nor blunt his moral feelings. It only ripened the thoughts and mellowed his affections. Therefore not less in his later years was his company eagerly sought, and his house frequented. Those, for whom he had felt in days of sorrow, came thank-

fully to cheer him in his years of weakness. He himself, with deepening humbleness, acknowledged more and more, as he advanced, his own shortcomings. For he had set up a high standard, and was abased as he fell below it. But others judged him differently. They, as they watched him, could scarce believe that human worth could reach so rare perfection. Spirits so buoyant, yet so self-restrained; a temper so cheerful, yet so even; wit so playful, yet so innocent; affections so expansive, yet so true; a courtesy so uniform, thoughtfulness so considerate; such reverence for the will of God, yet such charity to man; such inflexible obedience to the Revealed Word, yet such indulgence to human failings, and such toleration of the widest differences; thoughts that came and went quick as rays of light, yet, like light, both bright and pure. They who looked on him wondered to see him in the tranquil evening of life, as Bowdler had admired him in its busy noon; or as the sanguine girl pronounced him a being of angelic goodness, when she saw him, in his earlier days, in Gisborne's forest-home.

But let us resume and close the story. When Mr. Wilberforce left Parliament in March, 1825, he purchased a house at Highwood Hill, ten miles from London, with 140 acres of land. Till his house was ready, he remained in a cottage near Uxbridge; and there his friends resorted to him—his long-tried friends, Macaulay; Babington, Butterworth, and Lord Gambier; younger men, Tom Macaulay, and the Thorntons, and Inglis, and Buxton. There also came Joseph John Gurney, Dr. Lushington, North,

and Leslie Foster, and Sir Stamford Raffles; travellers from the East and from New Zealand, men of note in Church and State, all glad to open their budget to him, and to hear his lively impressions. In 1827 he was settled in his new home, and part of that summer he spent in visiting his old county of York; to find there towns which had swelled beyond his early recollections, and lands which had flushed into a wider and more advanced cultivation. In the ranks of men alone he found blanks. Many of those, whom he had known in his younger days, were departed; and the gaps painfully reminded him of friendly faces and warm greetings not to be seen again. "My friends are daily dropping round me; the companions of my youth are worn out, while I still remain." But where it was the faithful and true-hearted who were taken, he had abundant comfort: "We may follow them in our thoughts and sympathies into that paradise into which we trust they have been received, and may hope at no distant period to see them once more." But, though a generation had thus passed, his name was not forgotten. In Wentworth House, as in humbler halls, he was gladly received; and when his bent figure was noticed again in the cloth-halls of Leeds and Huddersfield, they rung once more to the shouts which in old days had welcomed the name of Wilberforce.

He was cheered by the sight of a marked progress in morals and religion. To this he had contributed both by example and words. His work on "Vital Christianity" produced in its time a wide impression,

and did more to introduce religion into the higher classes than any work of former or later days. He, indeed, while he rejoiced at the change, never thought of his own exertions as producing it. But the public were not unmindful of his services. "They treated me as if I were some great person," was his simple remark. More touching was a testimony* which reached him from the rudest class of society, which comes to us from an eye-witness. In one of his last visits to Bath, the little dwarfish figure, twisted now into a strange conformation, was wending its way up one of the steep streets by which loaded carts bring coals to the inhabitants of Bath from the port on the Avon. Two rough carters were urging their feeble horses up one of the steepest of these streets, when one of the horses slipped and fell. The man, to whom the cart belonged, a burly specimen of a savage race, infuriated by the stoppage, rained blows and kicks, mingled with hoarse curses, on the prostrate animal. Wilberforce, who was near, and who forgot everything in his sympathy, rushed forward, when the giant had raised his hand for a further blow, and interfered, pouring upon him at the same time a torrent of eloquent rebuke. The fellow, arrested in the very

* I owe this anecdote to the kindness of my friend Lord Teignmouth, who has favoured me with many instructive recollections of Mr. Wilberforce. Other incidents, both in this and former chapters, have been communicated to me by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, whose memory travels over a space of more than sixty years, and retains every fact clear and vivid as when it occurred —his the happy gift of an intellect undimmed by age, and a heart with the freshness of perpetual youth.

height of passion, and furious at the language used, stood with his face like a thunder-cloud, as if meditating to turn his stroke on the puny elf who appeared before him. At this moment his companion, who had recognized Wilberforce, stepped up to him and whispered his name. The word acted like a charm. In an instant the lowering face cleared, and from rage and sullen hatred the look passed at once into wondering reverence; as if, in the midst of his brutal passions and debasement, there was suddenly presented to him an object that awakened the better feelings of his nature, and drew forth his slumbering sympathies.

When the old statesman first settled in his new home,* he felt strange and perplexed. The routine of a life so different from his former activities troubled him. "I feel strangely awkward in returning to my ordinary duties." The stream of friends was for a moment suspended. The absence of his boys tried him. "My spirits quite sink at the idea of being here when my boys leave me." But soon he fell into his old course. He drew round him his friends. "As I grow older, I find myself growing more attached to such of the companions of my youth as are still left to me." But he also kept his friendships "in repair" by the addition of younger friends. In his earlier days he had admired intellect; but now he said he preferred the company of "the simplest person, who fears God, to the best company of a contrary kind." As to differences of opinion on secular matters, or differences of sectarian views, he

* See Life of Wilberforce, vol. v.

trod them down: "Oh, when we really believe a man to be serving God, I delight in trampling on all these little points." Moral purity he felt transcended far the efforts of intellect. "Much mystery," he says, "overhangs knowledge, and time with an oblivious touch effaces the little we do attain of science; but blessed is he who attains some lineaments of the moral image of God, for they shall see Him as He is." But he held that, for those who sought knowledge, Christianity was the only sure way of access. When some one cited the saying of an astronomer, that there are things which must be for ever hid from man, he exclaimed, "No; that they shall not. I shall know all these things." "I feel elevated and thankful to bear part in this magnificent creation, to be the child of Him who is the Governor of these boundless dominions." "I find unspeakable pleasure in the declaration, so often reiterated in the Word of God, of the unvarying truth of the Supreme Being. To me there is something inexpressibly sublime in the assurance, that, throughout the whole immeasurable extent of the all but infinite empire of God, truth always extends, and, like a master-key, unlocks and opens the mysterious wisdom, goodness, and mercy of the Divine dispensations." Again he says, "Only think of that one declaration, 'God is perfect truth and perfect love.' That one thought worked out is enough to fit a man for heaven." "I wish I could send you," says one of his later visitors, "something of what I have heard in the beautifully simple explanations that he gives every day of a chapter that he reads from the

Testament. I should have much to tell you, at some future time, of sentiments and ideas of his, all so beautiful, and so true, and so indulgent, for I think nothing more striking in him than that spirit of general benevolence which governs all that he says. . . . . Then he seems so thoroughly pleased to hear any anecdote in praise of any person who is talked about, and so ready to make allowance in others for the faults that he has not a taint of himself." "I spent a few days," says another, "at his house, just after Moore's Life of Lord Byron was published. I brought it with me, and read parts of it to him at night, while he was pacing up and down the room with all the quickness and gaiety of a child. What struck me particularly was his anxiety to find out anything in Lord Byron's favour." His fund of spirits, and his interest in everything, made him of all men most easily pleased. "If I were called upon," says Sir James Macintosh, "to describe Wilberforce in one word, I should say he was the most *amusable* man I ever met with in my life. Instead of having to think what subjects will interest him, it is perfectly impossible to hit on one that does not. I never saw any one who touched life at so many points. When he was in the House of Commons, he seemed to have the freshest mind of any one there. There was all the charm of youth about him. He is quite as remarkable in the bright evening of his days, as when I saw him in his glory many years ago."

In 1830, losses fell upon him, and with losses slanders. Neither of them touched him. The

calumnious attack he bore calmly. "I meant it well," he said; he could refer his act and its motives to a better Judge. Had he been so minded, his losses would have been readily repaired. His admirers (among whom were many West Indians) offered to restore his fortune; but this he declined. Freedom from cares, a home under the roofs of his children, more than compensated for the blow. "Our heavy loss has led to the solid and great increase of our enjoyments;" his life, he said, seemed prolonged in order to show that a man can be as happy without a fortune as with one. Other bereavements touched him more—deaths in his own family and the circle of his friends; but for these pangs the old man had a sure anodyne. "I have often heard," he said, "that sailors on a voyage will drink 'friends astern' till they are half-way over, and then 'friends ahead.' With me it has been 'friends ahead' this long time."

Politics, with which he had been so long conversant, he gladly dropped. Their excitement had never been alluring to him. His love was for the country and a quiet life; and often, when he left the country at the call of business to return to London, he says, "I really could scarce refrain from tears." Now he could abstain, and rejoice that he was freed from the turmoil. But to younger men, entering on the work which he had left, he was always ready to give his counsels, and to tell them of the talisman which he had used, and which had carried him through the conflict. "Prayer, almighty prayer, is the grand maintainer of the spiritual life—prayer to be under-

taken by realizing the unseen world, and endeavouring to feel ourselves in the presence of our God and Saviour." On himself the infirmities of age crept gently. "I am becoming yearly more stiff and crazy;" but he could write, on completing his seventy-second year, that he suffered no pain, and that when he had a complaint it was always mitigated. "What thanks do I owe to God that my declining strength appears likely not to be attended with painful diseases. How good a friend God is to me. I am abashed to think of the afflictions of others. Still more, I am quite ashamed of my comforts, when I think of Him who had not where to lay His head. God has so crowded His mercies on me." The infirmities of such a mind were deprived of their chief pang. "When the cup presented to me has some bitter ingredients, surely no draught can be deemed distasteful which comes from such a hand."

In 1830, he took the chair unwillingly at a great meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society. This was his last public effort. When solicited to resume the chair the following year, he declined. The public horizon looked dark in 1832, but the darkness could not cloud his sunny repose. "I trust that I may calmly, though humbly, resign myself to the gracious disposal of that great Being, who has poured out on me such unnumbered blessings." His one desire was, "that he might become more and more harmonized with the sentiments and dispositions of a better world." All reference to his past services vexed him; the language of praise pained him;

flattery was odious: "I had much rather he had spit in my face." To himself he seemed an unprofitable servant; his only comfort was, that "we serve a gracious Master, who will take the will for the deed."

In 1833 he went, for the last time, to Bath. There his illness increased. Visited by Joseph John Gurney, he opened to him his inner feelings—his delight in the Psalms, and the various Epistles of St. Paul.* In the smaller Epistles, their harmony and variety struck him—the Epistle to the Galatians, marked by a "noble exhibition of doctrine"; that to the Colossians, by "a union of doctrine and precept"; the Epistle to the Philippians treating of social and domestic duties; and that to the Ephesians, a seraph's strain. "With regard to myself," he added, "I have nothing whatsoever to urge but the poor publican's plea, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.'" He removed to London to consult a physician; and there the vote of £20,000,000 for the abolition of slavery greeted him. When he received the tidings, he had revived under a temporary rally. He was able to be wheeled into the garden; and, though he himself felt that his end was near, he talked to those about him with his wonted animation. "I do declare," he said, "that the delight I have in feeling that there are a few people whose hearts are really attached to me, is the very highest I have in this world; and as far as the present state is concerned, what more could

* Life, vol. v. p. 364.

any man wish at the close of life, than to be attended by his own children and his own wife, and all treating him with such uniform kindness and affection."

On the 27th of July, fits of unconsciousness came on; and on the morning of the 29th he died, having nearly completed his seventy-fourth year. At the request of a large number of members of both Houses of Parliament, among whom were princes of the blood, cabinet ministers, and the most distinguished statesmen, a public funeral was awarded; and to Westminster Abbey, the ancient resting-place of worth and genius, attended by a large procession of members of both Houses, all enmities closed and all opinions blended in one national tribute, the remains of Wilberforce were borne. His tomb is in the north transept, beside the tombs of Pitt and Fox. Public meetings at York and Hull were held, to erect memorials to his memory; and, when the news of his death reached New York and the West Indies, the coloured population went into mourning. The abolition of slavery, sure one day to be universal, remains a monument of his public efforts; and the growing worth, the integrity, and the independence of our public life, no less than the enlarging philanthropy and practical piety of the English people, bear witness, with an emphatic testimony, that Wilberforce did not live in vain.

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